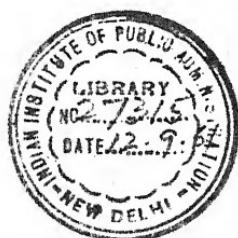


FROM WRONG ANGLES

GAGANVIHARI MEHTA

> > "G. L. M." < <



1934

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To

Saudamini

Owing to whom life to me has been
One stream of ringing silvery laughter
and

But for whose delightful personality and association
G. L. M.'s contributions would have been impossible.



APOLOGETIC INTRODUCTION

Truth is always amusing, when accurately stated—Bernard Shaw.

“Humour,” said Euclid, the celebrated author of Euclid, “ultimately depends upon the angle from which you look at a situation or a question.” And if Euclid did not say it in Greek, somebody equally ancient and equally venerable, said so in Sanskrit, Latin or Chinese. For antiquity is the halo of men, the validity of customs, the proof of tradition, the test of truth. The older a thing is the more sacred, the more ancient a dogma, the truer. But, since what Euclid said in Greek is Greek to us, the present writer takes the full responsibility of saying it and facing all the consequences.

Then came the mathematical philosophers of the later generations who proclaimed in emphatic, if somewhat abstruse, language that all human questions are, at bottom, problems of angles. It all depends upon *the way* you look at the thing. If you stood on your head—and a true philosopher always asks *you* to do so—you would see the whole world upside down; if you watched men from an aeroplane, you would think they are small, insignificant creatures crawling on the earth’s surface like so many ants. All tangles and wrangles are due to the angles from which you look at men and matters. Angularities of men are but personal angles.

Then after the lapse of five thousand years or so, came the European War, the principle of self-determination for the subject-nations of the enemies, Mr. Montagu and his “angle of vision.” Even Guardian Angels of

India, with their wings clipped off owing to shortage during the War, spoke of a change in the "angle of vision." Angels speaking of angles! Which will no doubt remind one of the historic and memorable remark of Pope Gregory who, on seeing the Anglican children in slave market, remarked (in Latin)—"They are not Angles but angels!" The circle (which has incidentally no angles) is now complete and angels speak of angles (of vision). But this is getting rather complicated.

Who it was (if any one at all) that said "Where the angle of vision ith wrong, laughter resulteth." The old form of the present tense "ith" clearly indicates how ancient the declaration is (or ith). Perhaps it was King Mahanjandaro or Shakespeare or a Book of Quotations who said so. Like the proverb, its sayer (or author) is forgotten. Anyway, the angle of vision which generates laughter is humour or wit or fun or whatever you choose to call it.

Humour reflects at once the qualities of Vishnu and Shiva: it is the Healer and Destroyer in one. It relieves the mental tension and delights the mind; it destroys false values and unworthy gods. Laughter might be born of any incongruity from sheer buffoonery to the most subtle irony; its background may vary from mere fun to the most penetrating philosophy. Humour is a great disillusioner. It has been used in all battles of social regeneration and in all wars against injustice; satire is a keen and powerful weapon in a debate. Laughter, rightly conceived, is a purificatory force; it is the path to Heaven—not the Heaven above, in the skies, but the Heaven that we seek to create in our midst. It should, for such purposes, be

used not as a shield but as a sword. It is a holy instrument of pacific war. Despairing of creed wars, Mr. Bertrand Russell once observed :

"The best hope, though a faint one, is that people might become bored with platitudes and turn to the humorists; from this point of view the popularity of Mr. Bernard Shaw is encouraging. But, then, if this happened, there is the possibility that Scotland Yard would institute a censorship of jokes, in which case I hope I would then be in prison with the jokers."

The fact is that we, as a people, do not laugh enough. Travellers and foreign residents in India have noted how little of the merry, irresponsible laughter there is on the roads and the wayside stations in India. Different people have attributed this phenomenon to different causes—from Hindu metaphysics with its *Karma* on the one hand, to poverty and ill-health on the other. But laughter is not one of our strong points. We rarely burst out into that spontaneous and gay laughter, in which, for instance, the Burmese or the Chinese or the Latin races indulge. Laughter plays an almost insignificant role in our national life. It was precisely because of this that an Irishman once told me that Indians must learn to laugh if they wanted to be free. To laugh at the smug self-complacency of England, at the subtle hypocrisy of a governing caste which deceives even itself, at its pretentious claims of disinterested benevolence for the Indian masses. Laughter can pierce through false prestige and arrogance more acutely, quickly and effectively than a long-winded argumentative speech.

But we must learn to laugh not only at others but

also at ourselves ; at our platitudes, *cliches* and shibboleths, at our petty and futile squabbles, at our endless word-spinning and idle dialectics, at the gulf dividing the profession and practice of our public men, at our innumerable hypocrisies and lack of sense of proportion in public controversies, and a thousand and one weaknesses which set a limit to our aspirations and ambitions. We need iconoclasts who will make us see ourselves as others see us—without a tinge of superiority or malice. For, in true humour there is neither. One touch of laughter makes the whole world kin.

There is a paper in France which publishes every morning the motto “I hasten to make fun of everything lest it make me weep.” It is the tragedy of all laughter, the relief of all tears. Cynics, if they are genuine, are lovers of humanity ; to laugh at all should be to forgive all. The things of which we make fun are often such as would make one fly in rage against them : the cruelties of a social system which Dickens exposed and the craziness of mankind which Anatole France satirised would provoke other minds to anger or contempt. For as Shelley sang, our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught. But while others resort to exhortation or denunciation or argument, the humorist simply draws attention to the incongruity of the situation. Because he looks at the matter from another and a radically different angle. It might seem a wrong angle. But if a sense of humour is an intellectual discipline, wrong angles are very often the only right angles to look from.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

These skits have been written from time to time and cover a period of eleven years, as will be evident from the date at the foot of each chapter. They were published in various newspapers and journals, including the *Bombay Chronicle*, *To-Morrow*, and the *Rangoon Mail* which I hereby acknowledge. Since 1928, however, all of them, with one exception, have appeared in *Indian Finance*. "G. L. M.," in fact, has become an integral part of *Indian Finance* and the writer takes this opportunity to acknowledge his deep (but spiritual) indebtedness to the two editors of the journal not only for their courtesy in permitting a republication of the articles which were originally contributed to their pages, but for their appreciation and courage in allowing them to be published at all in the first instance.

GAGANVIHARI MEHTA



CONTENTS

Part I.—Problems Political

	PAGE
1. The Viceroy of To-Morrow ...	... 3
2. Cycle of Indian Politics: The Next Viceroy	... 13
3. The Masses: Who and What they are ...	... 28
4. Notes on Politics (for Beginners) ...	... 35
5. Geometry of the First Round Table Conference	... 40
6. "The Congress Long Dying" ...	... 44
7. In India's Parliament: A Glimpse of the Next Session	47
8. How to Repair the Round Table: A Reconstructive Plan ...	... 54
9. Politics and Business ...	... 61
10. The Third Round: A Study in the London Disagreements ...	... 66

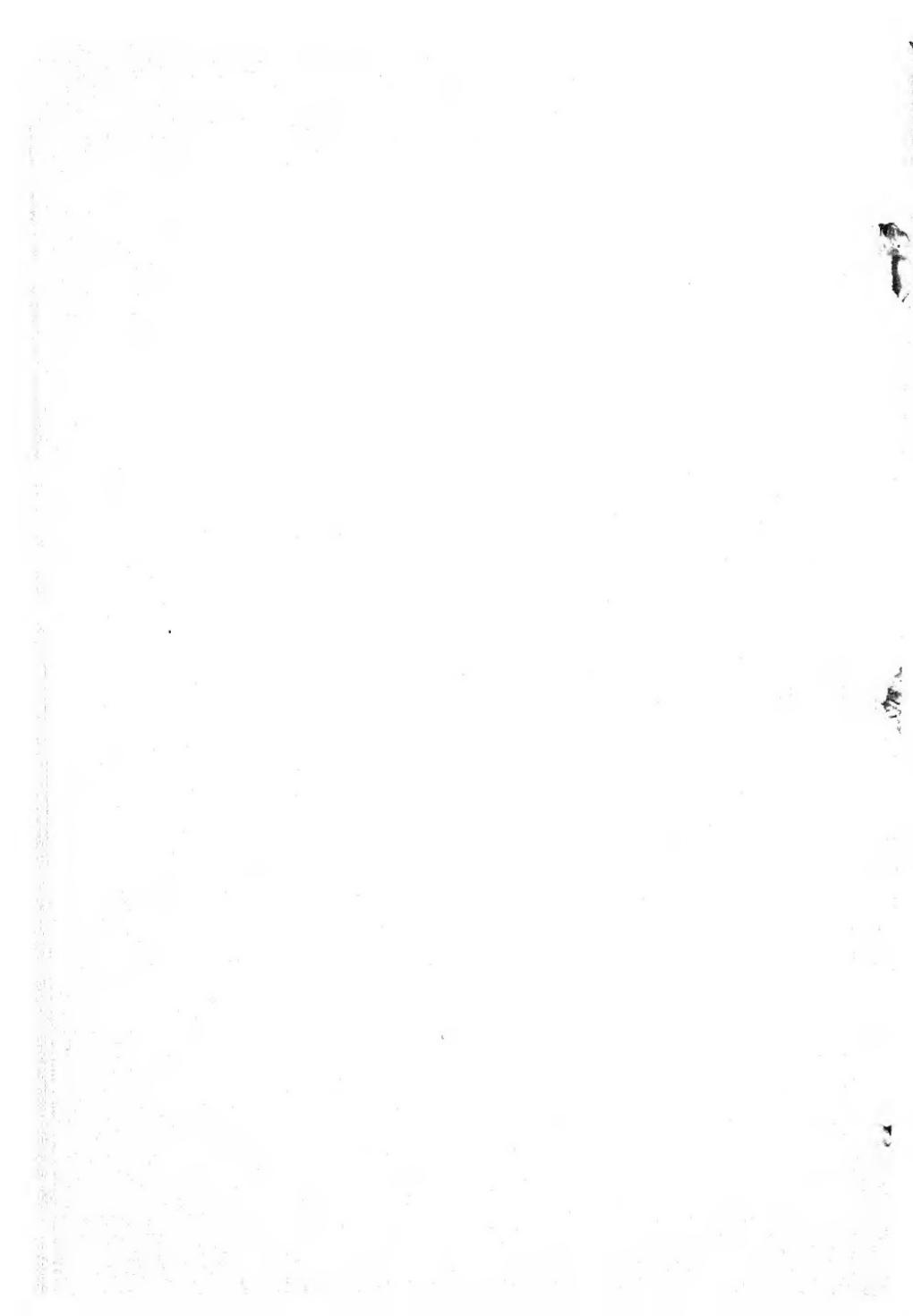
Part II.—Affairs Economic

1. Notes on Economics (for Beginners) ...	... 75
2. Impressions on Depression ...	... 78
3. All-Round Exploitation ...	... 85
4. From World-Depression to Personal Depression or <i>Vice Versa</i> ...	... 89
5. Economics Made Easy ...	... 94
6. Resurrected from Waste-Paper Basket ...	... 101
7. At Ottawa: A Forecast ...	... 108
8. Loanacy: Or Moon-Beams on the New Conversion Loan ...	... 121
9. On World Causes and World Conferences ...	... 124
10. Gold Standard—To Be Or Not To Be ...	... 128

Part III.—Matters Miscellaneous

	PAGE
1. Thoughts on the Chinese Situation ...	137
2. No More Days ...	139
3. "Honours" and Honour ...	141
4. A Singular Outburst of Plurals ...	146
5. A Week of Self-Denial ...	152
6. Test Papers on Law and Order ...	157
7. Flowers of Speech: Garnered and Made Up-to-date	167
8. On Experts ...	172
9. Wisdom in a Nutshell ...	179

PART I
PROBLEMS POLITICAL



THE VICEROY OF TO-MORROW

Mr. Bernard Shaw has defined To-Morrow as the day that never comes and Shelley says that all seek To-Morrow which is nowhere but that

In thy place—ah well-a-day !
We find the thing we fled—To-day.

But in another sense to-morrow does come and things happen in it. For instance, it is quite possible that with to-morrow would come the news that self-government has been truly bestowed on us by the Labour Party which was pleased with the co-operators in India for standing up against the salt-tax and that *you* were appointed the first Indian Viceroy in place of a Viceroy of India. What would you do if such a contingency arose is a problem that must increasingly worry a good many minds—especially minds which have been in the forefront of the fight in this party or that. In order to ascertain the views of the prominent leaders of the public, the present writer acting as an unaccredited correspondent of *To-Morrow* interviewed several of them. Almost all the leaders received him courteously and granted him all facilities. His question was one and stereotyped : “Supposing, Sir, you learn in to-morrow’s papers that you are made the Viceroy of India and that self-government is granted to our country, what would be your future plans ? Can you tell me the nature and scope of your immediate policy and first steps ?”

This question was put first to Mr. C. Rajgopalachariar. He smiled and said, “You are joking. I would never be made the Viceroy. The mantle would

fall on some worthier head.” When the correspondent suggested that the question was purely hypothetical, he nodded and replied that in that case his first anxiety would be to swamp the Secretariat with *Khadi*. “I would even substitute the coarse white tape for the present red tape,” he said in a half-amused tone. “I would have as much cotton-yarn spun as the present Government spins yarns of another and less innocent kind. Instead of allowing the Presidents or the Speakers of the Legislative Houses to sleep as they do at present, I would insist on their spinning while listening to the debates. Another important step I would take would be to appoint a Joint Viceroy who would be a Mussalman, to appoint a member of the so-called ‘depressed classes’ to be a member of the Executive Council or the Cabinet and to have a Minister of Non-violence instead of the present Commander-in-Chief. Again, I would repudiate the ‘national’ debt incurred from 1923 to that time.”

“Supposing, Sir, the Legislature opposed such a course—” I interrogated.

“Then I would gladly resign,” he replied immediately, “and find a more congenial occupation for myself.”

The next leader interviewed was Mr. V. S. Srinivas Sastri. When the interviewer entered the room, he saw Mr. Sastri studying a huge map of the British Empire and trying to ‘think imperially.’

“What can I do for you”? he inquired a little sedately suspecting the visitor to be a spy or a Non-co-operator. When the correspondent explained the object of his visit, Mr. Sastri frowned and smiled in

turn and perhaps even suppressed a sob. Evidently he did not consider the supposition quite out of the range of possibility; so he pulled himself up in his chair and became even more solemn-looking and dignified than usual. In a clear, slow, weighty tone, he spoke to the correspondent as follows :

"Imperial unity is the one object on which an Indian Viceroy should focus his attention and concentrate his energies. I would therefore exert my prowess to the utmost extent to enhance imperial unity and brotherhood. Every alternate year I would invite all the Dominion Premiers to Delhi and would hold conferences with them and as conferences have a habit of dining, I would not look upon my mission as completed without that most happy function."

The correspondent asked Mr. Sastri as to what would be done during the intervening period and he said, "Deputations would be sent from India to the various Dominions to return the imperial call, to give our brothers in the Empire a much-relished opportunity to pay back their debts in terms of hospitality, to extend the hands of fellowship across the breakers of the ocean and to reciprocate those admirable sentiments of goodwill and justice which are the very bedrock of that vast and unique conglomeration of sister-nations that we know by the name of the British Empire. . . Yes," he murmured, "Deputations are necessary if Imperial reputations are to be made."

"Would you not, Mr. Sastri, do all in your power to redress the grievances of our countrymen abroad? An Indian Viceroy could surely make the badge of helotry a thing of the past," I asked.

"Yes, certainly, definitely, assuredly," said Mr. Sastri, "But I feel that the equal status for which we so rightly plead can come about only by the exchange of social amenities between official and non-official leaders of the various parts of the Empire. What is needed above all in the world to-day is understanding and understanding can come in politics, as in social life, by frequent, prolonged and intense association and co-operation—even if that association has no immediate object and is confined to, say inter-dining, I think its ultimate political effects are invaluable. But, let me add, not even with an Indian Viceroy can we hope to build the Rome of Justice and the Temple of Equality in a day. Platitudes must deafen the ears of men before they can be made to act. Lastly, I may also warn you that even equal rights may be bought too dearly—at the price of a breach of imperial co-partnership, for example. To me the grievances of our countrymen—righteous and just as they are and having a share of my full and entire sympathy as they have—are but matters of detail compared to the glorious fact that we are members of the same Empire and, if divided by the barriers of race, are yet united by the far stronger bond of human brotherhood and common interests."

"Would you release Mahatma Gandhi if you were the Viceroy, Mr. Sastri?"

"I have the utmost regard for the tremendous moral personality of Mr. Gandhi and it would, I am sure, be a matter of privilege for me no less than a source of delight if a man at whose feet I am unworthy to sit can regain at my hands the freedom which is con-

sistent with that respect for law and order which we of the Moderate Party have always upheld."

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu laughed at the idea of a poetess becoming a Viceroy, "Till now," she said, "Poets are dragged into politics; then let me hope, politics would become poetical. Poets, as you know, are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. If I were the Viceroy I would seek to introduce some poetical element in politics. A poet instead of singing unbidden hymns must take active part in politics till the world is wrought with hopes and fears it heeded not. Poetry, of course, can not be promulgated by proclamations nor can romance be recreated by resolutions. But a beginning is possible to realise the ideal that I cherish, to body forth the vision that I see. It would be possible, for example, to make it compulsory for all members of the legislatures to quote some lines of poetry in their speeches—preferably at the end : for poetic perorations are fine—in order to lend a touch of charm to the crude and harsh realities of governance. Let me illustrate my point. A member after a vehement denunciation of a new paper currency law would burst out like this :

"Paper Coin—that forgery
Of the title deeds, which ye
Hold something of the worth
Of the inheritance of Earth!"

"By means of bounties for the promotion of poetry and a Board on the lines of the present Tariff Board, I would attempt to organise and co-ordinate poetic movements in the country with a view to there being a steady, consistent and all-round development of the poetic wealth of the nation—the only wealth," observed Mrs.

Naidu, "which cannot be counted in figures and which is not liable to be robbed."

Mr. B. F. Bharucha said that if he became the Viceroy, he would try his level best in his humble way to

1. Nationalise
 - (a) the army
 - (b) education
 - (c) railways
2. Start
 - (a) merchant marine
 - (b) a naval fleetwith (i) the help of
by (ii) enlarging the present Scindia S. N.
Company.
3. Reform financial conditions by
 - (a) reduction of expenditure through
 - (i) Indianisation
 - (ii) a "cut" in the salaries of the top-heavy bureaucracy
 - (iii) securing of honorary services for the State which would be national
 - (b) increase of revenue by
 - (i) Gradual abolition of the Zamindari system
 - (ii) a radical reform of agricultural policy through
 - A. Application of scientific methods in cultivation
 - B. Co-operative movement
 - C. Re-organisation and revivification of rural life

- D. Solution of the problem of subdivision of land
 - (iii) a scientific adjustment of taxation on a fair and equitable basis of incidence.
 - (iv) enhancement and manipulation of tariffs
- (c) revision of industrial policy by
 - (i) fiscal autonomy
 - (ii) a policy of protection with bounties and subsidies and duties
 - (iii) encouragement of small and cottage industries by
 - A. Supply of hydro-electricity in villages
 - B. Supply of State aid by loans etc.
- 4. Reform social conditions by
 - (a) legislation of inter-marriages (more radically than Dr. Gour)
 - (b) compulsory abolition of child marriages
 - (c) state-aid to widows
 - (d) bounties to bachelors making for a less acute rise in population
 - (e) endowment of motherhood securing economic independence of women
 - (f) a policy of total Prohibition
 - (g) drastic measures to remove untouchability
- 5. Reform international conditions by
 - (a) establishing representative government in Indian States
 - (b) fostering public opinion in the States
 - (c) organising an Asiatic Federation
 - (d) sympathising with Angora and the Turks

- (e) being on friendly terms with Afghanistan
- (f) pacifying the Frontier Tribes
- (g) attempting the liberalisation and easterenisation of Japan
- (h) participating in the League of Nations when it becomes a real League including all the peoples of the world and making for genuine and disinterested co-operation.

The correspondent also consulted several lawyer-politicians of Madras and Bombay who were of opinion that they would accept the Viceroyalty on condition that they were allowed to continue their private practice. "Many doctors are allowed to do so after they join State service," some of them complained. "We would then substitute Law for Justice in the administration of India and after Lord Reading's rule based on the latter, who would deny that the former must have a chance?"

On being pointed out that in no other country was such a practice followed, they said that India was not any other country but India. "In India we need more law-suits—not to provide work for our briefless brethren but to further the study of law in all its aspects and to establish firmly the reign of law whose reins are with us. Such a reign is antithetic to revolution, for revolution is fundamentally an extra-legal method, and involves a turning over of the legal structure and an eradication of the legal basis. Hence we are opposed to revolution. Revolutionaries believe that law is so simple that the mass of people can understand it, and that hence the whole edifice of law must go: their first demand therefore is to hang the lawyers—a demand with

which we are not particularly in sympathy. This had happened in revolutionary France and Soviet Russia and may happen in India if a future Indian Viceroy does not take care to make the people respect Law—and its interpreters and worshippers, the lawyers."

As the correspondent was smiling at the obvious contradiction between this and a previous statement, some of the learned gentlemen assured him that consistency was not a virtue in law any more than in politics. "Inconsistency in pleading a law case is fatal—to practice as well as to prestige; but inconsistency as between pleading different cases is the secret of success and the gateway to wealth. This elasticity of opinion is also essential for a Viceroy. We think therefore that a lawyer would be the best man possible."

The correspondent then interviewed some prominent industrialists, mostly from Bombay. They said that the *sine qua non* of good government is the application of business principles in governmental affairs. "If we become the heads of the Government, we could transform the whole Government of India into a glorified Joint Stock Company with share-holders instead of taxpayers, calls instead of duties, debentures and mortgages instead of treasury bills and loans, a Board of Directors instead of the Executive Council with its Chairman as the Viceroy." Asked whether the British Parliament would approve of such a measure, they said that they would pay an underwriting commission to the M. P.'s and the British people are liberal and generous when the argument of money is made. Asked about the benefits of their proposal, they said

that its greatest merit was that it would resolve the whole dilemma between private enterprise and nationalisation. "For instance, in the problem of railways we could secure the benefits of both company and state management by such a course. Our educational policy would be directed to giving such education as would benefit the mass of people to be efficient employees and not enlarge their minds in an inconvenient fashion as the present education sometimes (though, fortunately, not often) does. We would put an end to the rivalries between state employees and employees of private companies while conflicts of policy in labour questions between the industrialists and a democratic national state would be avoided. Our system would imply the instant dismissal of a slack 'hand' instead of his promotion to the Executive Council that the present system ensures. In a word, our system would mean 90 per cent. efficiency, 90 per cent. power, 90 per cent. profits and 90 per cent. progress."

The rumour that Lord Reading was also interviewed and that he had agreed to serve as a Viceroy under a *Swarajya* Government, promising to administer Justice that would be impartial in favour of Khadi instead of Khakhi is not true. The correspondent is not well-dressed enough to pass the outer gates of the Viceregal Lodge.

May, 1923.

CYCLE OF INDIAN POLITICS.

THE NEXT VICEROY.

PROBABLE SUCCESSOR TO BARON IRWIN.

(*By Our Special Representative*).

London, 21st September, 1930.

Many names are mentioned as probable successors to Baron Irwin as Viceroy. Lord Ronaldshay, Lord Willingdon, Lord Lytton, Baron Lloyd are among those whose names are freely rumoured as possibilities. Sir Reginald Craddock and Sir Michael O'Dwyer are considered in well-informed circles here as definitely out of the run.

Later.

Sir Cyril Haddon's name has been added to the list of those likely to succeed Baron Irwin. He is an expert in horticulture and it is felt that as action on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture will be taken during the regime of the new Viceroy and as Baron Irwin's remarkably successful policy of agricultural improvement needs to be supplemented and strengthened by a vigorous and comprehensive project of horticulture, Sir Cyril's appointment is regarded as not only a likely eventuality but a very desirable appointment. There is little doubt that it will be welcomed here.

Still Later.

Nothing is apparently certain about the new Viceroyalty and all the previous rumours are discredited. The latest name frequently heard in political circles is of Mr. Horace Napkins, lately Governor of Jamaica, an ex-Post Master General and a well-known mineralogist who has also made a special study of Indian art. As an example of his super-human energy, it may be mentioned that as the Post-Master General, he changed the colour of the stamps thirteen times in one week and as that was an unlucky number came back to the original hue: and as the Governor of Jamaica, he had all the huts of the natives destroyed in a feverish search for valuable mineral resources. India, it is recognised in authoritative circles here, would be really fortunate if she obtained Mr. Napkins as the next Viceroy. It is felt that while Baron Irwin successfully and sympathetically tried to solve the complex and intricate problem of land, Mr. Napkins will go below the surface of the land and try to exploit, of course in a purely economic and scientific sense, the potential but undeveloped mineral wealth of India. The proposal is greeted, among others, by the Mining Association.

(British Official Wireless).

London, 23rd September.

Latest.

It is officially announced that Commander George Smith-Iron has been appointed the Viceroy to succeed Baron Irwin. Commander Smith-Iron's appointment is hailed with delight by the press and the public

alike. The unanimity of public approval is, remarkable indeed, though of course it has never been other-otherwise in the case of Viceregal appointments. Commander Smith-Iron was the Minister of Health in the last Conservative administration and presided over the Health Commission. He began his political career as a Sanitation Inspector and has made the subject of sanitation all his own. Moreover, it is interesting to mention that the study of micology and entomology are his favourite intellectual hobbies. His appointment is an unmistakable indication of the Home Government's interest in the sanitary well-being and progress of India. Because of the spread of an epidemic of gout and dyspepsia among the members of the Indian Civil Service, particularly in the higher and British sections of it, following the action on the Lee Commission's recommendations and of an increasing number of cases of enlarged spleens among Indian "coolies" in Assam and elsewhere, it is felt by the Secretary of State that thorough and comprehensive investigation into the sanitary conditions of Indian villages and cities with particular attention to the sanitary amenities of the residential quarters of Europeans and the Secretariat offices is absolutely essential and is, in fact, overdue. Commander Smith-Iron has made a special study of sanitary problems and is deeply interested in India and her peoples as well as problems : it is evident therefore that he will combine these two pronounced characteristics of his, like the man who wrote on Chinese metaphysics by combining what he read under *China* in the "Encyclopædia" with what he read under *Metaphysics*. It is interesting to recall that Commander Smith-Iron's

great-maternal-uncle was a Police Commissioner in Orissa and his fourth cousin was an irrigation officer in the Punjab. Thus he has a great family-tradition of service in India in his connection with India and his interest in India does not merely begin with his appointment. It will be also of interest to mention that the new Viceroy has written a book on "Brains, Drains and Cranes" relating to civic health and town-planning which won the encomiums of Baron Lloyd as well as Sir George Buchannan. It is expected that Commander Smith-Iron will concentrate his attention during his Viceroyalty on sanitary progress and it is certain that he will succeed in making the lives of the people cleaner, healthier and brighter.

A COMMISSION ON SANITATION.

24th September.

It is authoritatively announced that a Royal Commission on Sanitation with wide terms of reference (to be announced later) and an expert personnel (also to be announced later) is to be appointed—*Reuter*.

PEERAGE FOR NEW VICEROY.

Commander Smith-Iron has been given a peerage and made Viscount Mortimer—*Reuter's Special*.

(i)

BRITISH PRESS COMMENTS.

The papers are unanimous in welcoming the selection of Viscount Mortimer as the Viceroy and the appointment of a Commission on Sanitation. Gratification is expressed at the happy coincidence of the Com-

mission investigating the vital problem of public health during the Viceroyalty of one whose reputation in the field of sanitary organisation is second to none in the Empire and whose knowledge and work in that direction are an asset to India. The *Times* in an editorial headed "The Right Choice" observes that "after Lord Reading's establishment of justice sharpened by firmness and Baron Irwin's inauguration of a new era of agricultural improvement, it is but meet that we turned our attention to ameliorating the conditions in which the vast masses of India—who are by the way unshakably loyal to the Raj—live and have their being. Viscount Mortimer is the right man chosen for the great tasks that have to be performed in the near future. He will have, for example, to give a practical and concrete shape to the recommendations of the Sanitation Commission now appointed as well as to the policy adumbrated by the Statutory Parliamentary Commission whose report is still under the consideration of the Secretary of State and the Government of India."

The *Morning Post* ridicules the idea that India can become contented again by improving sanitation. It is to give a pill for curing an earthquake. We have gone too far on the road to surrender to stop the process by erecting drains and reorganising conservancy departments. It is not accidental that the outbreak of gout and dyspepsia amongst the members of what Mr. Lloyd George in a rare moment of inspiration called the "steel-frame" of our administration in India broke out when the Parliamentary Commission was taking evidence. It proved conclusively that the European members of the Services were afraid to move about for

fear of being assaulted by Congress seditionists and hired mobs and for consequent lack of physical exercise got gout; the outbreak of dyspepsia is the result partly of adulterated and bad food supplied by Indian merchants which has been on the increase since non-co-operation and partly to the European officials' taking their meals in haste owing to their hurry to preserve the British character of the administration. The paper warns the Government that the fundamental evils of anarchy and loss of prestige and power of the British will not be cured by a toy-commission or by a Viceroy substituting platitudes on sanitation for those on justice or agriculture. We must either leave India or go back to the Constitution of 1858.

PREMIER ON THE NEW VICEROY.

The Premier speaking at the Guildhall banquet last night referred in eloquent terms to the Viceroyalty of Baron Irwin which is coming to a close and which, he said, had revolutionised the agricultural conditions of India (Cheers). The Report of the Commission on Agriculture is still under the careful consideration of the Government of India who have appointed an expert committee to consider the recommendations of the Commission and suggest ways and means of taking action on them. It is a real pity that the culmination of Baron Irwin's statesmanlike and far-sighted policy of rural amelioration will be reached when he will no longer be there to watch it just as the sublimation of Lord Reading's devoted and earnest labour in the cause of reforms was the report of the Statutory Parliamentary Commission which had recommended the suspension

of the reformed constitution in the absence of any signs of genuine co-operation on the part of the Indian political leaders and of any easing of the communal tension. (Cheers). After paying a tribute to the patience, firmness, tact and sincerity of Baron Irwin, the Premier proceeded: "Now the subject of drains which is henceforth to be entirely in the hands of Indians is, as is well-known, the peculiar object of the new Viceroy, Viscount Mortimer's affections. Viscount Mortimer, therefore, goes at a critical period in our relationship with India and in his responsible and arduous duty, he carries with him not merely the good wishes of his colleagues but the confidence of the country (Loud cheers). That the country knew nothing about him before his appointment is a qualification rather than otherwise in these days when people who are known are people who are found out. (Laughter and Cheers). Viscount Mortimer's heart is in sanitation and I feel assured that he will not rest until he has wiped out dirt, squalor and ill-health from every Indian cottage and home and particularly from the quarters of the cities occupied by our Civil Servants and the Secretariats. (Loud cheers)."

THE NEW VICEROY ON HIMSELF.

At a reception given to Viscount Mortimer where many distinguished visitors including Lord Reading, the Maharaja of Alwar, H. H. the Jam Saheb and Sir Maneckji Dadabhai were present, the new Viceroy made a fervent and moving appeal for good-will and co-operation between the British and Indian peoples in the great and difficult task that lies ahead of them.

Among the speakers was Mr. Horace Napkins whose name, it will be remembered, was mentioned in connection with the Viceroyalty. Mr. Napkins said that there was little doubt that Viscount Mortimer would work a sanitary revolution in India and inaugurate a new era of health and happiness. "There is said to be discontent in India but, believe me, it is on the surface. I know something of things below the surface (laughter)—I have gone down the mines (Loud laughter)—and I can tell you that below the surface of fictitious and manufactured agitation there is the solid feeling of contentment, relief, if not of deep gratitude, for all that we have done for India and all that we have been to the masses (Loud cheers). I have not been to India but the voice of the dumb millions of India speaks to me in a manner which leaves me in no doubt of its real significance and import."

Viscount Mortimer in replying was visibly moved by the sincerity of the reception and the sumptuousness of the meals (particularly the wines). He thanked the speakers for their good wishes and their compliments; the one he would cherish, he said, the other he did not deserve. "I wish I could tell you how the sense of responsibility has overwhelmed and nearly crushed me since the announcement was made. I have always been deeply interested in India and fascinated by her peoples and problems but little did I know, little did I hope, that I would have an opportunity—as precious as it is onerous—of having so intimate an interest in her. My task has been made all the more difficult by the remarkably successful administration of the Viceroy whose successor I shall have the privilege to be

(Cheers). On the question of reforms, I do not wish to dwell at present partly because the subject, I understand, is being closely gone into by the Home Government who are in constant touch with the Government of India, but partly also because I want to study the numerous complicated issues involved in the question before I am able to pronounce any considered opinion upon it. What is needed in India, above all to-day, is understanding and understanding can be promoted in politics, as in other things, by prolonged and intense co-operation. We have made repeated gestures for co-operation ; so many, indeed, that if they had been made by an individual instead of by a Government—which, thank God, has no face (laughter)—he would have worn that gesture as a natural expression of the face (Loud and prolonged laughter). But I trust I shall be fortunate enough to obtain the proofs of that sincere and genuine co-operation which have been denied to my predecessors. I know I shall be supported in my task by Lady Mortimer who, I feel certain, will take the amount and the kind of interest in Indian women and children which the wives of Viceroys are usually expected to do. (Loud and prolonged applause)."

THE NEW VICEROY BUSY.

The Viceroy-designate is feverishly trying to acquaint himself with India and her problems. He has specially occupied one room for himself in the India Office and passes his whole day there working all the hours to master the intricate and manifold questions relating to India. Viscount Mortimer eats there the simple luncheon provided by a special Mussalman cook

engaged through the good offices of the Secretary of State and the Aga Khan and sleeps on a camp-bed. Authoritative quarters comment favourably on the Viscount's anxiety to learn all about India particularly his eagerness to acquaint himself with Indian culinary. No Viceroy, it is said, ever engaged a native cook before his departure and was so keen to know the details of Indian life. It is felt also that his knowledge of Indian food will influence the policy of sanitation which is the subject nearest to the new Viceroy's heart. Viscount Mortimer, interviewed, said that India was not a new proposition to him since for years he had been attracted to that vast and wonderful land and had been deeply interested in her future. Nevertheless, after his appointment, he was getting all the materials to know India and her problems more intimately. His study had convinced him that there was no reason to feel pessimistic about the destiny of that country. He was full of faith and hope in the future of India and in the certainty of her union with the British Empire. He held that the one solvent of all the difficulties of the present situation was good-will which would dissipate misunderstandings, suspicions and distrusts. The new Viceroy expressed his firm conviction and intention of basing his policy on the bed-rock of optimism and trust. "Not only sanitation, but sincerity, was needed to cleanse the impurities of politics," he concluded.

(ii)

Mr. Jinnah refused to be interviewed at this stage about the new appointment as he wished to study the

question more carefully before pronouncing an independent judgment. He also wanted to know what Pandit Motilal had said about it since he would be better placed to contradict the Pandit's baseless insinuations against the Independents.

The *Bombay Chronicle* writes under the caption "Who is Mortimer?" : "The news of the appointment of the new Viceroy will be received by the overwhelming body of Indian opinion with that sheer indifference with which the latter has been treating all such appointments for the last few years. And this is not without reason. A change of Viceroyalty does not mean, in Mahatmaji's phrase, any change of heart of the bureaucracy as irresponsible as it is unresponsive. Viceroys may come and Viceroys may go but the bureaucracy which like the Bourbons has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing goes on for ever. That such a second-rate ex-cabinet minister who is practically unknown even in England has been foisted upon India in the most responsible position of an accredited representative of the King betrays not only the real nature of British anxiety to do the right thing by India but also the total impossibility of persuading the "benevolent(?) trustees" (sic) of India to listen to her demands by the Liberal method of prayers, petitions and resolutions. That Baron Irwin had not an authentic spark of statesmanship is now recognised even by the loyalists. But we fear there is hardly any greater chance of Viscount Mortimer's opening out his arms to the one Indian leader who counts and seizing the psychological moment and the rare opportunity of reconciling India and Britain in an everlasting, free

and equal union. It is therefore time for all the parties to unite under the Congress banner and by the irresistible strength of the disciplined will of the people bend the alien and obstinate bureaucracy to its will."

The *Indian Social Reformer* writes : "While we welcome the selection of an honest, sincere and noble-hearted Englishman like Viscount Mortimer with his intimate family traditions in India for the post of Viceroyalty, we would caution the Government that there is a real danger of centralising a provincial and transferred subject like sanitation owing to the recent interest evinced in it by the Central Government and the Viceroy-designate and to the appointment of a Sanitation Commission. The subject of sanitation, as the late Sir Narayan Chandavarkar was never tired of pointing out, is one that is peculiarly susceptible to local conditions and requires local and varied treatment. It is the Swarajists' fault and one of their numerous disservices to the sound constitutional evolution of India that they have encouraged this centripetal tendency for party purposes and for consolidating Pandit Motilal's autocracy which denies provincial autonomy and initiative."

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu refused to give any opinion on such a conventional and mechanical artifice as an alteration of Viceroyalty. Her mission, she said, was different—it was specific and responsible. It was to harmonise the divergent communal elements of India into a national synthesis which was the sublimation of national aspirations and spiritual ambitions of the people. She felt strongly that national unity which was the fundamental condition of liberation could be

realised by a co-ordination of the vital factors that dominate the national life to-day.

Mr. K. F. Nariman observed : The petty hypocrisy of the Government's move in its cynical and silly efforts to earn cheap notoriety by grandiloquent kite-flying about sanitation is only equalled by its insolent guilt. Viscount Mortimer's fatuous and pompous cant about sanitation will deceive nobody, not even the sycophants and toadies because the preposterous profession of the bureaucracy are at par only with its abominable mal-practice. That a Viceroy-designate who is as unknown to fame as he is ignorant of Indian conditions should have the amazing audacity to talk of sanitary advance is a scandal which though not unexpected after the inglorious record of the bureaucracy is certainly a piece of contemptible tomfoolery.

Mr. B. F. Barucha writes in the *Bombay Chronicle* under the heading "An Open letter to Viscount Mortimer" and the sub-title "Inviting agitation or promoting sanitation?": Have you carefully perused, marked and inwardly digested all the open letters written by the writer to the high officials published from time to time—often daily and at times even twice a day—in these columns? Particularly may I invite your attention to those addressed to

- (i) Lord Reading.
- (ii) Baron Irwin.
- (iii) Sir Leslie Wilson.

in which the writer has tried to show that India is to-day pessimistic, paralytic, petrified because of (i)

the exchange ratio of 1/6 which will ruin, sap and strangulate

- (a) Indian industries.
- (b) Agriculture.
- (c) Wage-earners.

as conclusively shown by that economic genius, Prof. K. T. Shah.

(2) The stores policy which favours British capitalists and unemployed at the expense of Indian interests. Is that "benevolent trusteeship" of Britain, please?

(3) The Back Bay reclamations which have imposed an unbearable burden on the starving and over-taxed people of Bombay for at least a generation.

(4) The "Vita" tragedy in which the Magistrate did not consult even a Webster's dictionary about the meaning and use of life-boats but relied on the so-called "experts" for the same.

(5) Colonel Watson's one-sided, biassed, unjust and oppressive decision on the Shatrunja Hill which has surprised, shocked and angered the Jains. Will you even now do bare justice, Viscount Mortimer, and reverse the decision please?

(6) The Dalhousie policy of encroachment on the Indian States followed by Lord Reading and his successor which is seen in :

- (a) the forcible and unjustified dethronement of Maharaja of Nabha.
- (b) the treatment meted out to Maharaja of Indore.
- (c) the offensive and arrogant snub given to the Nizam in the Berar controversy.

- (d) the insulting and humiliating advice to the Nizam to employ Europeans in his services.
- (e) the treatment given to the Thakore of Rajkot.
- (7) Bureaucratic encouragement of communal tension by employing "goondas" at Calcutta to drive away Marwaris who are the commercial competitors and serious rivals of European merchants.
- (8) Government's obstinate and total refusal to grant the cherished desire of the whole of India, namely Swaraj.

Do you know, Viscount Mortimer, that India is oppressed, her industries are depressed, her desires are suppressed and her liberties are repressed? Do you realise that while the bureaucrats are vegetating and the Moderates are meditating, the Congressmen are cogitating and the real workers are agitating? Why are you then sanitating? Are you aware that the greatest man of the world is advocating constructive programme consisting of Hindu-Muslim-Parsi-Christian-Sikh-Jain-Jew-Buddhist unity, propagation and sale of khaddar and elevation of the depressed classes and will you please see him, preferably at Sabarmati, and make terms with him? Meanwhile leaders please, sink your differences, present a united front to the bureaucracy, work the constructive programme among the masses and achieve Swaraj. Will you, Viscount Mortimer, rise equal to the occasion and will you leaders seize the great opportunity? Let us see.

THE MASSES.

WHO AND WHAT THEY ARE.

A correspondent writing to the press asked recently, "Who are masses?" It is an eminently reasonable and pertinent question. The election speeches and newspaper articles constantly speak of the "masses." The Nationalist calls them the "teeming millions" of India while the retired Civilian writing to the *Morning Post* laments the fate of the "dumb millions" of India. It appears, therefore, that the masses number millions, though it is hard to say exactly how many millions. They are "dumb," however, not through any physical defect or illiteracy or ignorance but through sheer loyalty. In fact, though "dumb" they are vocal in their expressions of loyalty to the Raj and their voice is audible to the suburban flats and the newspaper-offices in London. And though dumb, they are not deaf; for occasionally they listen to the sedulous and mischievous propaganda of the Nationalists. Fortunately, the ear is a neutral organ and is open to loyalist exhortations as well. The masses, it seems, are sound at heart. They have not one heart, of course, but many which beat in unison through gratitude to "Pax Britannica" and are hence viewed collectively. The masses are the last refuge of the baffled bureaucracy. They are in favour of everything to which the recognised leaders of Indian public opinion are opposed and against anything advo-

cated by the educated classes. The masses are against Protection and Indianisation, revision of the Constitution and in favour of Bengal Ordinance and Back Bay Scheme and 1s. 6d. ratio. They are not seen in political meetings where there are only hired mobs and crowds. But they are seen watching gubernatorial processions.

I have, however, tried to discover who the masses are and what is their exact position.

It appears that the masses live in thatched huts in villages though occasionally they emigrate to the towns. To come in contact with the masses, therefore, you must go to the villages and reconstruct them (that is, the villages, not the masses). That is why everybody is asking everybody else to go to the villages and leaders are making fervent appeals for village reconstruction. Seriously alarmed at this, Hodge has taken the place of the squint-eyed statue of Justice at Delhi and a noble peer whose name sounds like that of a Welsh village (Linlithgow) is presiding over an enquiry to find out how the Government can anticipate the leaders by reconstructing the villages and reaching the masses first.

The masses live for 23.6 years and those who are above that age are to be considered as dead for statistical purposes. That is one of the reasons why almost all the leaders in India are dead for they have outlived the average age of the Indian and cannot be identified with the masses who die early.

The masses are four feet seven inches in height and 83 lbs. avoirdupois in weight because in the memorable words of Gokhale they have been "dwarfed and

stunted" in stature through foreign rule. They are also bent from the waist or neck since, to quote again the same high authority, the tallest among them have had to bow to the bureaucrat. It happens, of course, that some bureaucrats are shorter even than four feet seven inches but in that case they acknowledge the said bowing by ascending on the top of a pedestal of blue-books and undisposed files.

The masses eat one meal per day, marry early and have 7.3 children per head, their meagre earnings being exhausted on this .3 of their child. They are illiterate but quite shrewd in judging political leaders. They are very religious-minded, attend kirtans and can sing three bhajans. But they are against the silly controversies of mosques before music—a phrase which should become current because in many instances the congregations near mosques have advanced to meet the musicians before they came near them—mainly because their knowledge of music is better than that of the processions. Of course, they frequently form these processions but the troubles there are started by quite a separate class of men who are known as "goondas" and who are either "agents provocateurs" or hirelings of clever politicians who have an axe to grind, exploit communalism and so forth. The masses are not communally inclined and being both Hindus and Mussalmans are united. However, there is need of inter-communal unity. They are against the petty squabbles for the loaves and fishes of office—the Hindus among them suggest that being vegetarians the formula of "Chappatees and Pendas of office" should be substituted instead—though they suffer from unemployment.

As for their political judgment, opinions vary somewhat. In the opinion of some Swarajists they are prepared for civil disobedience and want it : in that of others they want it but are not prepared : while in that of still others they are neither prepared nor do they want it now. They are against the acceptance of Ministerships which they call selling their birth-right for a mess of pottage, though they occasionally enquire what pottage is and call it potash. According to Responsive Co-operationists, the Independent Congress Party and the Liberals, it seems that the masses have seen through the Swarajist camouflage, masquerade, chicanery and inconsistencies and want the Councils to be worked for all they are worth though they are not worth much and capture and use all positions of advantage as well as disadvantage. In another group's view, the masses are tired of these stupid party quarrels ; in fact, they were positively bored at one meeting and went to sleep. They know little and care less for them. They are sound at heart—here the bureaucrat and the Nationalist happily agree—and await the Mahatma's return. They are enthusiastic about spinning and can spin $1/4$ yard per head themselves ; they are equally keen about Hindu Muslim unity, removal of untouchability etc., but they want the leaders and workers to do all these things. What they want is action, constructive programme, a "definite lead" in fact. The Mahatma is definite but refuses to lead, the Swarajists want to lead but are not definite, while the other groups are neither definite nor can they lead. Everybody is happily in favour of the masses.

The proper thing to do with the masses is to organise them. Organisation is the secret of political success though the secret of organisation is rather obscure. The masses in cities are being exploited by industrial enterprises which, however, ought to be protected against foreign competition. The masses should be educated though, of course, the education should be in the real or true sense of the term which is also the broadest sense of the term, which is also the national sense of the term, and includes vocational training. The opinion of a witness before the Agricultural Commission that education in villages should have a "rural bias" is wrong since education should free men from all bias. But the masses should not be taught to write to the press.

The masses can be seen on wayside railway stations, in third class compartments, (though all third class passengers are not masses—Mr. Jivraj Nensey, for instance, occasionally travels third class but he cannot be called masses or even a mass: a term inapplicable even to Maulana Shaukat Ali) on fields when the train is passing and even in trams. I am told they once travelled even in the new 'bus' between Afghan Church and Crawford Market in Bombay.

The masses are usually males but there are female masses also. It is in relation to the education of these latter that the term female education is used. It does not mean that education has a sex—even the Freudians don't say so—but only that female masses should be educated differently from male ones. But that is a long way yet.

The masses are spoken of in plural because they are too many and because the plural form ensures reverence in address.

The singular form of the masses is not mass. The singular forms of the masses are two. When used in contempt by "high brows," snobs and members of the Indian Liberal Party, they are called the "man-in-the-street." The "man-in-the-street" is a thoroughly ignorant and irrational fellow being led by passion, fickle-minded and untrustworthy. But he is seldom found in the street. Once when I heard the term repeated a number of times I actually went down Dalal Street to find out the man in question. But there I met a real live Independent who had neither Indian nor National nor Congress as his prefix or suffix and he too spoke sneeringly of all the party fights and told me how hopeless the "man-in-the-street" in this country was. From this I concluded that probably the man they all meant was myself.

The woman-in-the-street has, of course, no more political significance than the term public woman.

The elector, on the other hand, is the respectable singular form of the masses. The elector is omniscient, wise and far-sighted just as the "man-in-the-street" is ignorant, stupid, short-sighted. The elector, of course, is the "man-in-the-street" during election times and his virtues, so far as he happens to support one's own candidature, are immortalised in a classic book on political science called "Pickwick Papers" by an author named Dickens. Now-a-days the elector is flattered, pampered, respected and appealed to like any despot. He is asked to be dis-

passionate and calm in his judgment before voting for one's own candidature. So certain the candidates are of the objective merits of their own programmes, so firm is their faith in the capacity and reason of the electors that they never fear the outcome of their judgment and appeal to the elector to exercise it. Who says there is pessimism and despair in the country?

On the one hand, the elector is asked to choose the best men and on the other, he is bidden to decide on the merits of rival policies. Both courses have their merits. The idea of sending the best men is attractive since it is apparently the best men themselves who have determined that they are the best. A programme of a political party is not to be confused with programmes of theatres or bands or marriage ceremonies and processions. It translates the policy of the party into concrete terms, the policy of the party being a continuous series of programmes. Policies of individuals are taken by Insurance Companies but policies of Governments and parties are announced. Every three months when the Houses of Parliament desire to take a day's holiday without actually proroguing or adjourning, it has become a policy for the Secretary of State for India or the Under Secretary of State to announce the policy of the Government regarding Indian affairs. Policies of political parties are, however, different in some respects. But its consideration should be postponed to some other day.

November 1926.

NOTES ON POLITICS.

(For Beginners.)

A Party in Indian politics means a group of politicians usually known as "leaders" who have the common purpose either of obtaining a majority in the All-India Congress Committee or of winning in elections to the legislatures or the municipalities. This is shown by the fact that the No-changers ceased to be a party in the political sense of the term as soon as Gandhiji asked them to hand over the machinery of the Congress to the Swarajists as also by the formation of the Indian National Party and the Independent Congress Party to fight elections on common anti-Swarajist tickets. The names of the parties are devised in various ways. Thus a party may bear the name of the object it aims at like the Swarajists; or it may be named after the policy it favours like the party of Responsive Co-operation or the Liberals; or, again, it may be described from the temperament of its members as the Moderate Party or the Independent Party; or its title may indicate its relation to the Congress such as the Independent Congress Party or the Congress Democratic Party or lastly, it may suggest nothing in particular and everything in general like the Indian National Party. The leaders of these parties occasionally give parties but that has no relation with the parties which they lead. Politicians thus lead as well as give parties. All parties are in favour of a "united front"

by which is meant everybody saying the same things against the bureaucracy and doing the same thing (though the thing to be done is rather obscure). Shortly, there is going to be formed a special party with this avowed object of presenting a united front. Unfortunately, the front at which everybody is to assemble to exhibit this picturesque unity has not yet been settled.

The *Policy* of a party consists of the aims which the party avows its intention to promote as well as the line of action by which they are to be promoted. An illustration will make this point clear. Two parties are in favour of acceptance of Ministerships. One party, however, has the policy of refusing to accept them until it is invited to fill these posts while the other enunciates the opposite policy that we should express our readiness to become Ministers even before we are asked to, thus compelling the bureaucracy by the expression of our readiness. The former is called "Standing on Ceremony" party while the latter "Bar-kis is Willin" party. Similarly two parties may offer a judicious mixture of co-operation and opposition. But one party may favour the policy of "obstruct where you can, co-operate where you must" while the other may have the policy of co-operating for the sake of obstruction, that is obstructing through co-operation. The policy of a party is determined by the need of funds and the need of votes : the latter determines the tone of speeches, the former the character of the action.

A *programme* is the concrete embodiment of this policy. It contains items numbered like an agenda or list or a questionnaire or Mr. B. F. Bharucha's letters to

the Press. The differences between the policy of one's own party and that of one's opponents are always fundamental and if personal, are due to the pique and obstinacy of the leaders of the opposite party. The rival party of a candidate has, of course, no clear-cut or honest or effective policy or has no policy at all and should be asked to state it in explicit terms.

A *challenge* is an invitation made at an election meeting to the opponent's party to explain his party's policy without explaining one's own. It is returned by a *counter-challenge*.

Policies are necessary for establishing and maintaining parties which, in turn, are essential for ushering in parliamentary government which can no more do without parties than can fish without water or Governors' wives without institutions for Indian children. In fact, this commonplace—that the existence of parties is a fundamental to responsible government—has become so stale that it is now considered dignified and harmless enough to find place even in the Viceroy's speeches. Surely, our preparation for Swaraj by forming parties will delight even the Step-Mother of Parliament.

The *Congress*: Sir Abdur Rahim, a Muslim "leader" (see above) from Bengal who is said to have written a minute of dissent to the Public Services Commission Report but has now apparently forgotten all about the incident says that the Congress consists of Hindu politicians. Lala Lajpat Rai condemns the Congress for sacrificing Hindu interests. To an outsider, it might seem, therefore, that if the Congress belongs neither to the Hindus nor to the Muslims it

must be consisting of Parsis. As things are, however, this is not true for the only Parsi members of it are Mr. K. F. Nariman, Mr. B. F. Bharucha and Mr. Shapurji Congresswalla along with Mr. Ginwalla and Mr. Jhabwalla. The fact that Hindu interests are being sacrificed by the Hindus who obviously form the majority is explicable on the ground that the Hindus are an essentially spiritually-minded people as they themselves are the first to proclaim. Or, it may have been done to propitiate and please Maulana Shaukat Ali, that large-hearted patriot. The Congress, therefore, consists of Hindus but sacrifices Hindu interests.

The majority party in the Congress, is called the *Tyrant* group and the minority, the *Rebels*. When the Swarajists were in a minority, they were called Rebels : now they are Tyrants and the Responsivists, the Rebels. The leader of the majority party is called an *Autocrat* because he desires and tries to keep the party in a majority.

All parties can join the Congress and are permitted to fight one another at election times. This is known as *fighting under one Flag*.

Public Service. The thing for which persons are given titles, that is a few letters of the alphabet after the name or a prefix before it. The term 'Public Service' covers various activities. It consists in presiding at public meetings and in being president or vice-president of social institutions and public associations without attending their meetings : in attending garden parties : in speaking about the imperative need of industrialisation without starting any industries : in retiring from an Executive Councillorship or Minister-

ship and in serving a Committee or Commission appointed by the Government (though the latter service is also rewarded by appointments to further committees). Public service may also consist in doing some piece of service for an official since in India a man can become popular with the Government. Washing our dirty linen in the public is a form of public service for the Government which is unhappily not always rewarded or there would be too many competitors for it.

December, 1926.

GEOMETRY OF THE FIRST ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE.

First Principles.

The Round-Table Conference has to meet around a *round* table because, otherwise, it cannot meet at all.

The Round-Table Conference is round in shape because the world is *round* as proved by Columbus who reached the same place from where he started and, therefore, triumphantly declared that he had discovered “America!” (Spanish for “end of the world”); by Einstein who has shown that the earth is relatively round; and by globe-trotters and cyclists who undertake a world-tour in steamers and railways.

The Round-Table Conference is round in size because great men are usually *round* (Note : In technical language they are called weighty persons).

The Round-Table Conference is round because it resembles a *merry-go-round* (*viz.*, it starts from Federation and ends in Federation, it begins with speeches and concludes with speeches).

The Round-Table Conference is round because its results can be summed up in a figure which is *round*.

Exceptions.

The Round-Table Conference is thus described even if it meets round an Oval or square Table because a Conference requires *rotundity* in size, persons and speeches.

Axioms.

All delegates in the Round-Table Conference are *equal* to one another.

Each delegate of the Round-Table Conference is *equal* to anything or nothing.

Postulates.

Let it be granted :—

That a Delegate to the Round-Table Conference has no *parts* and no *magnitude*.

That the President of the Round-Table Conference is an angular figure that has no *sides* but has an angle *inclined* towards the British side.

That the length of the Round-Table Conference is not *finite*.

Definitions.

The angle of a British Delegate of the Round-Table Conference is said to be *acute*.

The angle of a British Indian Delegate of the Round-Table Conference is said to be *obtuse*.

When the angle of the Indian Delegate is in the same line as the angle of the British Delegate, the former angle is called a *right angle*.

A *circle* is the plane figure in which the Round-Table Conference moves from the beginning to the end.

The *centre* is the fixed point in the Round-Table Conference which has to be discovered by the Delegates.

To *bisect* means to divide the Round-Table Conference into parts which may be equal or unequal.

No *straight* lines can be drawn in any direction from any one point to any other point in the Round-Table Conference.

Parallel communal *lines* are such that, even if not straight, they do not meet at the Round-Table Conference, however far they might be extended in either direction.

Theorems.

Theorem No. 1 (Euclid 84).

When the angles of the Indian Delegates are at a right angle to the angles of the British Delegates, the figure so formed is a *rectangle*.

Theorem No. 2 (Euclid 85).

When the angles of two Delegates of the Round-Table Conference are adjacent to each other but are not in the same line, the figure so formed is a *wrangle*.

Theorem No. 3 (Euclid 86).

When the angles of more than two Delegates of the Round-Table Conference are drawn in a circle, the figure so formed is a *tangle*.

Theorem No. 4 (Euclid 108).

The meals eaten by the Round-Table Conference Delegate are more than a *square meal*.

Theorem No. 5 (Euclid 807).

Any two sides of the Round-Table Conference are *less* than the third side *provided* the third side is the British side.

Corollary.

The minority in the Round-Table Conference is larger than the majority *provided* the minority is at a right angle to the British side.

Theorem No. 6 (Euclid 1009).

If from the opposite side of the Round-Table Conference an intersecting line be drawn cutting the Indian side, then it will *bisect* British India and Indian States, Hindus and Muslims, Brahmins and Depressed classes, India and Burma.

Theorem No. 7 (Euclid 20003).

If two tangles be drawn, each to each and equal to one another and if a straight line be drawn from the centre of one tangle to the centre of another, then a *Federation* is formed.

13th December, 1930.

"THE CONGRESS LONG DYING."

A FANTASY.

The Congress, we are assured on the highest authority, is dead. Granted that Whitehall and Fleet Street have heard from thousands of miles away its last gasp. But Sir Samuel Hoare, that expert in elegant and Eastern sayings, far from making a funeral oration has ignored even the hoary injunction not to speak ill of the dead. Although its obituary notices have appeared in all "honest journals," there is none who has sung a dirge or composed an elegy on it. Nevertheless the last rites are, we are told, being performed and those who have undertaken to bury it fathoms deep might, without irreverence, be described as the undertakers. Only an appropriate epitaph is essential to complete the obsequies. For the Congress is as dead as Queen Anne, who is the most dead queen of England, although it is difficult to know why she is regarded as more dead than Queen Elizabeth or even Queen Victoria or the other defunct royalties of the earth. There is surely no relativity in death.

Those who are certain that the Congress is actually dead, have inverted the well-known Coue method by constantly keeping on repeating that every day and in every way, the Congress is dying more and more. Nothing braver has been attempted since King Canute (spelt sometimes as King Cannot) ordered the tide to

stop at his command. Unfortunately, however, like King Charles II, the Congress is taking an inordinately long time in dying. King Charles II (although he is not as superlatively dead as the dead Queen Anne) had, it will be remembered, to apologise for being a long time in dying. An analogous expression of regret is called for from the Congress leaders and they should be permitted or rather compelled to do so from behind the prison bars. Since it will be an expression of regret, it might be included in the official communiquees among the cases of apologies by Congressmen and will satisfy the die-hards in England that although slightly hard in dying, Congressmen are properly grieved about the delay in their passing away.

If the Central Government is, as an Assembly Member pointed out, living beyond its means for the last few years, the Congress is, as Oscar Wilde would say, dying beyond its means since last January. In our younger days we used to crack a ponderous joke about a man having been sentenced to rigorous death for 6 years. It is imperative for the edification rather than the enlightenment of British Democracy (which is sound at heart) to declare from time to time that the Congress is breathing its last. For the Might of the Tories who are the Right in British politics has decreed that the Congress must die an absolutely final and fatal death unlike Sherlock Holmes who returned after his virtual demise owing to popular clamour for his revival. Hence persons in position have had the happiness and the rest of Indian humanity the unhappiness of learning that the Congress is no more. Very influential, well-informed and prophetic circles (which

move round an official centre) have conveyed and repeated the same story.

But death, says the mystic, is an illusion. There is no annihilation, assures the spiritualist, but only a transformation, no extinction but only an eclipse. Scientists proclaim (or at least used to in our college days) the principle of indestructibility of matter; even those who are not conservatives have faith in the conservation of energy. And the poet has sung that

Death is a low mist which cannot blot

The brightness it may veil.

The Congress might well protest, in the words of Mark Twain, that "the reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." But if they be even half as accurate as "authoritative versions" about the Frontier, death, perchance, is but a trance and a transition. Is Sir Samuel Hoare who is so deeply versed in Eastern parables aware of the fable of the phœnix which rose from its ashes? Resurrection is possible despite repression.

18th March, 1932.

IN INDIA'S PARLIAMENT.

GLIMPSES OF THE NEXT SESSION.

(Dissociated Press.)

Simla, 12th September, 1932.

In the Legislative Assembly to-day, Mr. Haig, the Home Member, moved a Bill for the suspension of the Laws of Arithmetic and Euclid. He said it was an emergency measure demanded by the extraordinary conditions in the country brought about by an insignificant minority of Congressmen who were minimum in number but maximum in their capacity for mischief. It was painful to the Government to move such a drastic measure; but since last December, they had endured so much pain in promulgating a sheaf of Ordinances and a bunch of Emergency Laws that their suffering had exceeded that of the so-called Satyagrahis and they (the Government benches) had lost all sense of pleasure in their work (*cheers*). The fact that before submitting such measures, they had been reluctant to bring them forward should convince the Assembly of their absolute necessity. They were martyrs to their overpowering sense of duty (including the 10 per cent. cut) and they were compelled to perform tasks which caused them so much pain that they were under medical treatment (*sympathetic cheers*).

Mr. Haig declared that the measure was required because of the disturbed state of the country which

was essentially calm because the masses were contented and sound at heart. He said that the simple proposition that one minus one is equal to zero was being unscrupulously utilised by terrorists in Bengal for getting rid of one man after another by violent subtraction while the method of addition was being unlawfully used by Congressmen in Bombay for increasing the number of picketers.

Mr. Kabir-ud-din Ahmed: Why not amalgamate the multiplication table with the Round Table? The Round Tablers need to be enlarged in numbers (*Laughter*).

Mr. B. Das: This is not a matter for laughter but for tears: tears brought about even by applying onions grown in Orissa.

Mr. C. C. Biswas: I will not allow Midnapur being separated from Bengal even at the cost of shedding precious ink.

Mr. Haig, continuing, observed that since unfair and illegitimate use was being made of innocent axioms of arithmetic and pious postulates of Geometry by the lawless elements for political ends, it was a regrettable necessity for Government to urge the House to suspend all Arithmetic and Geometry until normal conditions were restored through what were admittedly abnormal measures. They did not take this step without careful consideration. In fact, personally, he wanted to retain the chapter on Division for the solution of the Hindu-Muslim question but he hoped the award of the Prime Minister on the communal question would be an effective substitute for this method. He had it on the authority of his distinguished predecessor,

Sir James Crerar, that it had been definitely laid down in May's "Parliamentary Procedure" that prevention was better than cure, provided the Speaker in his turn did not prevent (*loud cheers*).

Sir Hari Singh Gour opposed the measure but welcomed the fact that Government had to yet decided to suspend Algebra. He said that although it was assumed that one and one make two, it must be remembered that the survival of any biological species points to an important exception to that rule (*loud laughter*) so that even this simple proposition was not so self-evident as it appeared. He appealed to Government to make a conciliatory gesture by excluding certain important theorems of Euclid which the constitutionalists and the co-operators could place before the country for weaning it away from the Congress. He particularly referred to the Fifth Theorem which laid down that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal and if the equal sides of the triangle are produced, the exterior angles will also be equal. He requested that this proposition might be retained in the interest of equality of trading rights and reciprocity, even if Government did not intend to produce the sides before the new Constitution functioned and although exterior angles may be treated as a reserved subject along with external affairs.

Sir A. Shurawardy strongly opposed the suggestion of Sir H. Gour. He said that after the Minorities Pact, no angles could be considered equal unless separate electorates were granted to the Mussalmans; and he insisted that if the sides are to be produced at all, they should be produced by a member of the

Minority community. In the Punjab, the communal triangle of the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Mussalmans was far more complicated and far less romantic than the eternal triangle of the novel, the drama and the screen. He was, if necessary, prepared to make a parallelogram of this triangle by recognising the rights of Britishers; but he asked whether in the absence of Geometrical laws, Government were prepared to lay down, by an Ordinance, that the opposite sides of the parallelogram would be equal. He submitted that any admission of the equality of angles should be coupled by a statutory recognition of their 14 or 140 points.

Mr. N. M. Joshi, in vehemently opposing Mr. Haig's proposal, remarked that he had no love for mathematics (*A voice : were you plucked in it?*) which he regarded as another device of capitalists for increasing profits and decreasing wages. The only principle in which the capitalist believed was the principal which carried with it compound interest. He requested Government to safeguard the interests of labour even after the present law was enacted by making it clear that an eight hours' day was shorter than a ten hours' day to prevent employers from overworking their men in the absense of Arithmetic.

Sir George Schuster admitted that the measure was very distasteful to him; but although the Congress movement had died, trade had been badly hit. Rather than pass such a measure, he was prepared to link the rupee to gold or to anything else the Federation of Indian Chambers asked him or to stop gold exports or to do hundred other things the people demanded;

but the situation had seriously deteriorated recently. Trade returns were being unfairly utilised for boycott propaganda under the guise of *Swadeshi*; deficit Budgets were triumphantly shown as evidence of the difficult position of the Government and of the victory of the Congress; the total burden of new taxation was calculated with the aid of Arithmetic; figures of exchange fluctuations were compiled and statistics of loans flaunted in order to condemn the policy of the Government. Bombay capitalists were abusing the Binomial Theorem for their personal gains and Bombay was committing a well-calculated suicide for ulterior motives with the help of Geometrical progression. No Government could sit still, or even stand motionless, and permit such flagrant abuse of Arithmetic and defiance of Geometry (*cheers from Government benches*). Despite this repeated and grave provocation, they had been extremely patient and stood aghast at their own moderation like Lord Clive and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. They had, for instance, not yet touched Trigonometry at all (*Applause from European benches*, Mr. A Moore interjecting, "The circulation of the *Statesman* which is an algebraic symbol will not be affected"). Sir George observed that as a corollary to the measure under discussion, they had decided to introduce a supplementary bill suspending the Finance Bill and the Budget for the next three years and to withhold publication of Customs returns and trade figures for the next five years in public interest. These were purely temporary measures and would be withdrawn as soon as the Congress was finally crushed.

Sir H. Gidney enquired whether the overtime fees

to Customs Officers the large majority of whom were Anglo-Indians, would be stopped.

Sir George assured the House that no nation-building activities would be stopped. No salaries or allowances or passage concessions or leave rules would be affected as it was unfair to the Services and the taxpayer. He said that salaries would continue to be calculated on the old basis of Arithmetic although it was being temporarily suspended. He regretted that the Department of Commercial Intelligence had no further *raison d'etre* and a proposal was under consideration for amalgamating it with the Department of Criminal Intelligence as the distinction between commerce and crime was becoming thinner and as the latter was the more vital intelligence at the present moment.

Sir H. S. Gour, on a point of personal explanation, made it clear that the Fifth Theorem had been cited by him only as an illustration and that he did not use the term isosceles in any offensive sense. As a proof of his sense of responsibility, he was prepared to substitute a triangle of any other shape (*cheers*).

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir acknowledged the moderate tone of Sir George's speech and pleaded for a reasonable administration of the measure when enacted. He asked whether the circumference of the *lathi* will continue to be twice its diameter as at present and whether the thickness of the *lathi* will be reduced to two-thirds as suggested by the Liberal Federation. He said that half the propositions of Arithmetic and Geometry should be retained as the Liberals were prepared to meet the Government half-way and, if necessary, walk back the distance. In view of the serious situation, they

were even prepared to agree to two-thirds being abolished but they could not agree to more than that. He urged that everything should be reduced to two-thirds, the number of Ordinances and the period of their operation, the number of arrests and the period of convictions, the size of the *lathis* and the heaviness of the charge and the number of casualties. He insisted that if the sides of the triangle are produced at all, they should be produced in India with at least two-thirds Indian capital and directorate.

Mr. Haig, in reply, said that he had met all the arguments by anticipation and could not accept any amendments. He was not even prepared to concede that if the peculiar conditions in India continued, the present year should be succeeded by 1933, as the forces, which challenged Government, exploited calendars and "political" prisoners were found counting the days of their sentences. As regards the use of the *lathi*, he was agreeable to order a *lathi* charge in the House if the members wanted a practical demonstration.

The President asked the sense of the House and as more than 25 members stood up in favour of the proposition, 4 p.m. to-day was fixed for the purpose. The House adjourned for lunch.

—9th April, 1932

HOW TO REPAIR THE ROUND TABLE.

A RECONSTRUCTIVE PLAN.

India is in the grip of what, in constitutional terms, is called a political dead-lock. By this is meant that about three people who were consulting with and being consulted by Government in a committee have refused to do either while about half-a-dozen big people, knights and a would-be knight, have said that if the Round Table Conference (hereafter called R.T.C.) is not convened, they will not participate in it. Constitutional co-operation is, therefore, *dead* at least for the time being and the gate to moderate consultation is provisionally *locked*. Hence the *dead-lock*. What is wanted is to revive the temporarily dead R.T.C. and unlock the door to negotiation by the key of St. James' Palace. But as Omar Khayyam put it—and he was no believer in Civil Disobedience Movement :

There was the Door to which I found no Key
There was the Veil through which I could not see.

* * *

Nevertheless, a way out, a *via media* in fact, must be found. The difficulty about this "bridging the gulf" business at present is that those very Round Tablers, who specialised in it and tried to "bridge the gulf" between Yerawada and Simla, are themselves on the other side of the gulf. The gulf was widened as indicated by S.O.S. (not "Save Our Souls," the distress-signal of steamers, but the Secretary of State).

Where the bridge was to be constructed, there runs a rapid stream which has destroyed the preliminary brickwork; and those who were trying to "bridge the gulf" are themselves engulfed. It is, therefore, essential now to discover new men to "bridge the gulf" between those who were bridging it only a few weeks ago and the S.O.S. The present S.O.S. makes the distressed Liberals send out a number of S.O.S.s.

* * *

Where are *they*? Will they come forward—or even backward because backstairs negotiations are not debarred? It was said of Kant, the German philosopher, that he dismissed God by the front door but admitted him by the back one. That is the importance of the back-door. In any case, the country and the cause of consultative co-operation calls them: patriotism and the duty of detailed deliberation hearkens them. To put it briefly, the Moderate leaders must be reconciled and the Liberal Party (consisting of those leaders) must be, in a historic phrase, rallied. It is a supremely constructive task—this task of reconstructing the Table.

* * *

I dedicate myself to it: at any rate within the brief span of this article. One thought which immediately strikes me is that the most important factor in the Indian situation is the Table. It was called Round but was really Oval in shape; attempts were made there to square the circle round the Table but were futile. The new Table which is being substituted by the S.O.S. is Oblong but that rouses the

resentment of the Liberals. Since the Knights of King Arthur, a mere Table has never received so much consideration and has never attained such political significance. The Table must, therefore, be used to bridge the gulf. But how? The Table has been broken : how repair it?

* * *

It is said that Liberals are born, not made—which, I should have thought, is a strong argument for birth-control. But let it pass. It is a common charge against the Liberals that they prefer half-a-loaf to none. This is unfair. They are more interested in the baking of a loaf than in the eating of it. They have such an organic conception of politics that they consider means as more important than ends. That is why they are agitated about the procedure of consultation but were never worried when the whole objective of consultation was jeopardised by the adoption of the dual policy and the incarceration of thousands of their countrymen. The journey from means to ends is a long one, as Lord Irwin pointed out in a famous speech; and the Liberals are so exclusively concerned and pre-occupied with means that the solution of the political crisis lies in devising more and more means.

* * *

Since the Muddiman Committee was appointed, we have had one Royal Commission on Reforms assisted by one Central Committee and a number of Provincial Committees. Then, there was the Great Conference which has held two sessions and has been so utterly successful that it gave rise to three Enquiry Com-

mittees with a sheaf of Provincial Committees. Besides, there was the Working Committee of the Conference which degenerated into Consultative Committee while a Committee of the India Office officials was busy devising the constitution under the Chairmanship of Lord Sankey. It appears that a number of questions has been left over by the Federal Finance Committee and the Franchise Committee for further investigation and they will be reviewed by departmental committees and, if necessary, by small expert committees whose findings will be considered by the Government and gone into by the Joint Parliamentary Committee. As the Princes are unable to agree among themselves about their representation in the Legislature, another Committee would very likely be appointed to decide this issue. The grievance of the Liberals is that they are not having one more Conference session or at least a meeting of the Federal Structure Committee to raise the structure of the Federation.

* * *

The way is, therefore, clear for S. O. S. He should create about 100 life-long and hereditary posts of R. T. C. Delegates and bestow them on all who want the revival of "the Conference spirit" and the resurrection of the "Conference method." In that case, not only the present generation but at least the next two generations would have the advantage of taking part in building up the constitutional framework on a basis of equality and friendly consultation. The number of Committees on special subjects that these Conferences will bring about is simply legion. No front-rank politician (except those in jail) will re-

main unemployed. Already the output of literature on Indian political reform far exceeds that of any other country but if this plan is adopted, it will stagger imagination. Just picture to yourself what will happen!

* * *

30th July, 1962.

Sir B. T. Sapru, H.M.I.R.T.C. (Hereditary Member of Indian Round Table Conference) has issued the following statement : "I have inherited from my grandfather the proud privilege of being associated with the British Government on a footing of perfect equality in the work of devising a satisfactory constitution. My father also, it will be remembered, contributed his share in evolving a federal structure and I, therefore, proceed to London full of hope and faith. The last thirty-two conferences have been entirely successful but the next session is expected to review the reports of certain Committees appointed to consider technical questions such as those of finance, franchise, federal relations and facts. He hoped to hand over the torch of enlightened co-operation to his son who was studying at Oxford."

Mr. Jaykar, L.M.I.R.T.C. (Life Member of Indian R. T. Conference), a grand-nephew of the Grand Old Man of the Conference, the veteran Mr. M. R. Jaykar, said in an interview :

"The Conference is co-existent with the process of political evolution of India. It can only end when constructive and responsive consultation can end—which is never. The 138 Committees which have em-

erged from the Conference during the last 30 years have thrown a flood of light on various special questions which require to be studied and constitute invaluable political material but the questions relating to safeguards have not yet been approached. It is proposed to approach, if not to reach, these questions at the next Conference. The Conference was a precious heritage which they should pass on as a bequest to their successors and executors in perpetuity.”

Mr. B. A. Jinnah, a Compulsory Delegate of the Minorities and a Minor, stated :

“As soon as the communal question is settled to the entire satisfaction of all the communities and meets with the approval of Mr. E. C. Benthall’s grand children, the Bill for the new constitution will be ready to be presented to Parliament. I strongly urge the Government to speed up the reforms; and, for this purpose, to appoint one small Committee with a satisfactory *personnel* to decide quickly which communities should be classed as Minorities and which as Majorities. We are determined to see that the new federal constitution functions before the end of this century.”

His Highness the Jam of Raspberry said that as soon as the Princes made up their minds and had minds to make up as to whether they should enter the Federation and if so when, how and on what terms, the Federation would be a Fact. He was hopeful that continuous Conferences like these would, in the end, solve the problem provided good-will was assured. He was in favour of the motto “more haste, less speed” or alternately “hasten slowly.” The prospects for further Conferences were very bright.

Cynics would, no doubt, say that though it was a fortune the Delegates had inherited, it was a misfortune so far as the nation was concerned. But cynicism is cheap and will also be cheap then even if world-prices are restored to 1914 level.

* * *

The position could be retrieved in some such manner. Like the Spirits in Dante's "Inferno," the Liberals would be, then, punished by the attainment of their desires : not *for* the Round Table Conference but *by* it.

30th July, 1932.

POLITICS AND BUSINESS.

The Ottawa Agreement has made at least one thing as clear as a crystal (with duty of 25 per cent. if imported from the Empire and 35 per cent. if non-Empire) and as definite as an economic axiom (manufactured in England for Indian consumption). The whole controversy in the country and the good-tempered debates in the Central Legislature have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt (provided the substance of faith is imported from the Empire) that *Politics must be absolutely, irrevocably and consistently divorced from Business*. They are as different as is chalk from cheese or as Mr. Shunmukham Chetty as a member of the Legislative Assembly is from Mr. Shunmukhan Chetty as a businessman of Coimbatore. They cannot mix, like oil and water. Any marriage between them should be prohibited, if necessary, by a new Sarda Act and declared if not null and void, at least dull and void. Divorce between them is essential and imperative and should be facilitated through a special bill by Sir Hari Singh Gour. Politics must not be permitted to pollute the sacred precincts of Business. The bigger the Business, the more dangerous the infection. Let this ban be described as the new untouchability, if you will.

The reasons for a sharp demarcation between Politics and Business are plain. Politics are cheap, dirty, disreputable and risky: business, on the other hand,

is profitable, clean, respectable and above all safe (in the political sense).

This separation has always existed in social history. When the strong Man of Property enforced his rule on his weaker brethren in ancient times, this distinction was clear. "Woe to the Ruler," says the old Hindu adage, "when the Ruler takes to trading"—whether in salt or in cotton piecegoods. When Jesus Christ said "Render unto Cæser the things that are Cæser's," he meant that only political obedience must be given to Rome, but that the interest should be paid to the Jews (the Scotch of antiquity). When Nadir Shah conquered Delhi, he emphasised the difference between politics and business by leaving India immediately after looting it. The saying that Trade follows the Flag which is the expression of economic imperialism is a half-truth. If Trade follows the Flag in some places, the Flag follows the Trade in others. Although the Flag is a political emblem, it is not the same thing as raw materials or market, currency or credit. The Flag might secure these things but it is different. This is shown by the history of the East India Company which, like Shelley's "Skylark," (to misquote the poet),

"Trading still dost conquer, and
Conquering ever tradest."

But the deep gulf, which divides Politics from Business, was never more vividly apparent than in the recent Indo-British Trade Agreement concluded at Ottawa. Although the Conference, where this Agreement was arrived at, was an Imperial Economic Con-

ference, the term "Imperial" had no political flavour in it any more than the control of Indian finance by Parliament or of the Reserve Bank by the Bank of England has any political significance. This was pointed out repeatedly by the Anglo-Indian Press which was unfortunately the only protagonist outside the Assembly of the Agreement designed in Indian interests. The Agreement is a strictly business document, made by businessmen (including Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Bennett, Sir Atul Chatterjee and Sir George Rainy) with business motives for business purposes to be judged as a business proposition. The business in it may not be quite pure nor the proposition very simple but there it is. It was, however, evident that political bias was tending to vitiate its dispassionate, that is, pro-business, consideration. Commercial bodies with political prejudices and businessmen with political ambitions which made them oblivious of their own larger interest applied to it the political criteria of narrow self-interest (*pace* Mr. Chetty). Economists with deep political designs compiled political statistics to pronounce it economically unsound. Members of the Assembly—fortunately too few—who are responsible for surreptitiously introducing politics in the business-like and spiritual atmosphere of the Legislature expressed misgivings, an entirely political feeling, about the economic reactions of the Agreement.

Unhappily, nothing in this country is free from the vile contamination of Politics, not even the legislatures which should be the last to dabble in such shoddy affairs. That Business matters should suffer the taint of Politics is an economic crime. Since the

days of Dadabhai Naoroji and R. C. Dutt, economic questions like poverty, the drain, debt, land revenue, cotton excise, salt and a host of others have been unnecessarily mixed up with Politics as though they had anything whatsoever to do with the political system obtaining in India. The evil has grown to such a magnitude that no economic issue has remained totally economic. Unless, therefore, Politics be entirely and finally banned through an Ordinance if necessary, or by special legislation if possible, and a perfectly tranquil and non-political atmosphere secured through emergency political measures, the country will go to economic perdition owing to this obsession with Politics. It is through the purgatory of Ottawa that we shall attain the Economic Heaven while avoiding the ghastly sin of Politics. What is wanted is, therefore, a clear breach between Politics and Business, except, of course, in so far as approval of Government action and measures constitutes politics. But this minimum of politics is unavoidable for businessmen—even for Sir M. Dadabhai.

There is, however, only one slight difficulty. It is to know where Politics begins and Business ends, or where Business begins and Politics ends in this country. If you say that there is terrible poverty in India or that there is a serious economic drain, it is politics; if you deny this, it is *not* politics. If you advocate an examination of the existing debts, it is politics; if you oppose such an enquiry, it is not. If you urged the establishment of a gold standard or supported the one-four ratio, you are guilty of introducing political considerations in the economic realm; but if you were

in favour of a sterling exchange standard and backed the one-six ratio, such advocacy did not at all constitute politics. It is not politics to insist on safeguards in the new constitution; but to oppose safeguards is to dabble in politics. Run through the whole gamut of economic issues, the same rule holds good—whether it is inflation or gold exports or linking the rupee to sterling or protection of national industries. What New Delhi approves and what serves the interest of Clive Street and the City of London is business; all else is introducing extraneous political considerations into business matters.

Luckily (for them), some of our industrialists and businessmen have fully grasped the implications of the salutary rule and are seeking to apply it in public life. When it suits them, they appeal to the swadeshi spirit; on the wings of patriotism, they fly into the haven of national preference and personal profit. But when it does not suit them, they scrupulously shun politics and ask that proposals like Imperial Preference be judged as mere business propositions.

Politics, you will thus see, is to be carefully and conveniently distinguished from Business. For, Politics is the Business of the nation; and everybody's business is nobody's business while Business is one's own personal affair, albeit with a little politics of its own.

24th December, 1932.

THE THIRD ROUND

A STUDY IN THE LONDON DISAGREEMENTS.

The most important event of the year 1932 A.D. (equivalent to the Chinese Year 32,457, at the present rate of exchange) was the successful session of the Third Indian Round Table Conference in London, where a series of new Disagreements about the future constitution of India were concluded.

It will be remembered that two similar Round Table Conferences were held in 1930 A.D. and 1931 A.D., where a number of Disagreements on different heads were arrived at and noted (by Lord Sankey). But unfortunately when the year (1932) commenced, like all other years, in January public interest in the London Disagreements began to vanish. The political situation in India took a turn for the worse; further consultations for reaching Disagreements were discouraged; and public attention was focussed on less important issues. All the Provincial Governments reported that the public was more concerned with such trivial things as ordinances, arrests, punitive fines, treatment of prisoners and detenus, Swadeshi, etc. Not even the members of the Consultative Committee of the R. T. C. which was constituted to work out the details of the London Disagreements knew whether the Committee was functioning or not and whether they continued to be members of the Committee or not. In this general confusion, one member resigned from the

Committee as a protest against the Hoare statement after the Committee had been dissolved; and another was asked to resign from it although he had never accepted a seat on it. The Committee, it is reported, died a painless death.

With the approach of the winter, however, the position became still more alarming. The Nawab of Pataudi had provided a rival attraction in Australia in late Autumn; and the Italian Tennis Players visiting India threatened to absorb public attention. The evil was so widespread that in a serious debate on the constitutional question, a speaker actually suggested that Mr. Jayakar's "service" was very weak and that Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar could not "smash" at all. The Press had forgotten all about the previous Disagreements reached after prolonged deliberations and hard labour; and Sir Samuel Hoare, who did not see the necessity of any further Conferences or Committees to arrive at fresh Disagreements or renew the old ones, changed his mind and recalled an attenuated caravan. Another Conference was, therefore, convened towards the end of the year when the warmth of affection compensated for the coldness of the weather.

Now, it will be remembered that, at the previous Conferences, it had been unanimously agreed that a Federation in India should be constructed on the sole condition that it was feasible and that the Indian States should join it provided they could do so. It had also been agreed that there should be complete responsibility at the Centre (of India) and in the Provinces, subject only to the evolution of a Federation and to the retention of special powers and responsibilities of the

Governor-General and the Governors in regard to defence, army, external affairs, finance, minorities, services, debt charges, commercial discrimination, Anglo-Indian education, European mid-wifery and a few other subjects (too humourous to mention). It was also understood that responsibility at the Centre was to be conditional upon the establishment of the Federation, which, in its turn, was dependent on the Indian States joining the Federation, which again was conditional upon the view the Princes take of the form and complete picture of the Federation. It had, of course, been decided that safeguards should not be any wider than were necessary to safeguard whatever interests desired to be safeguarded; and that reservations should only reserve what needed to be reserved. These conclusions were very satisfactory. The outcome of the two Round Table Conferences was, indeed, very round.

It was, therefore, in the fitness of things and under highly promising circumstances that the third Conference was called and convened. It consisted of representatives and delegates of all sections of Indian opinion except the Congress, which, being in an insignificant minority, was rightly ignored, with the help of the Ordinances. It is rumoured, however, that the Liberal Party (consisting of 8 leaders and 2 followers) was left out owing to the ill-health of 3 of the leaders aforesaid. All the expenses of the Delegates, except for hair-cutting and shaving, were paid by the British Treasury with the generous assistance of the Indian Exchequer.

The Conference was a complete and unqualified success.. As it was the third and perchance the final

round, all the Delegates held their breath till the last day, when Sir Samuel Hoare spoke. They then pronounced it a triumph. One delegate, who, perhaps, expected to be thrown into the Channel by the S. O. S., opined that the result of the Conference was not as bad as he had expected. Credit is due to his imagination for contemplating worse things. Another expressed satisfaction but asked others to suspend their judgment until the White Paper is published. Some people have already suspended their judgments until they are re-born. For, after the White Paper is issued, judgment will have to be suspended till the Joint Parliamentary Committee "fills in the picture"—and then until the Bill is presented to Parliament with the Princes playing polo in the picture—and then until the Act is actually in working. But this is a digression. Let us summarise the main heads of the Disagreements as arrived at in London.

1. There has been Disagreement about the structure and functions of the Federation as well as about the date of its inauguration.

2. There has also been Disagreement about the composition and size of the Federal Legislature, as well as its relations with the Federal Executive, as also regarding distribution of powers between the Federal and Provincial Governments, and residual powers.

3. Complete Disagreement was attained, after prolonged discussion, in regard to the special powers of the Governor-General and the Governors about issuing special laws for maintaining peace and tranquillity or in cases of emergency and about the definition of the special responsibility of the Governor-

General for preserving the credit and financial stability of India.

4. Perfect Disagreement was also achieved on the question of Defence, including issues such as army expenditure, Indianisation, the appointment of a Defence Minister, legislative control of the army budget or the employment of the Indian army outside India.

5. Cordial Disagreement was arrived at in regard to financial safeguards and such cognate questions as the Reserve Bank, the role and functions of the Financial Adviser, as well as about the financial relations between British India and the Indian States.

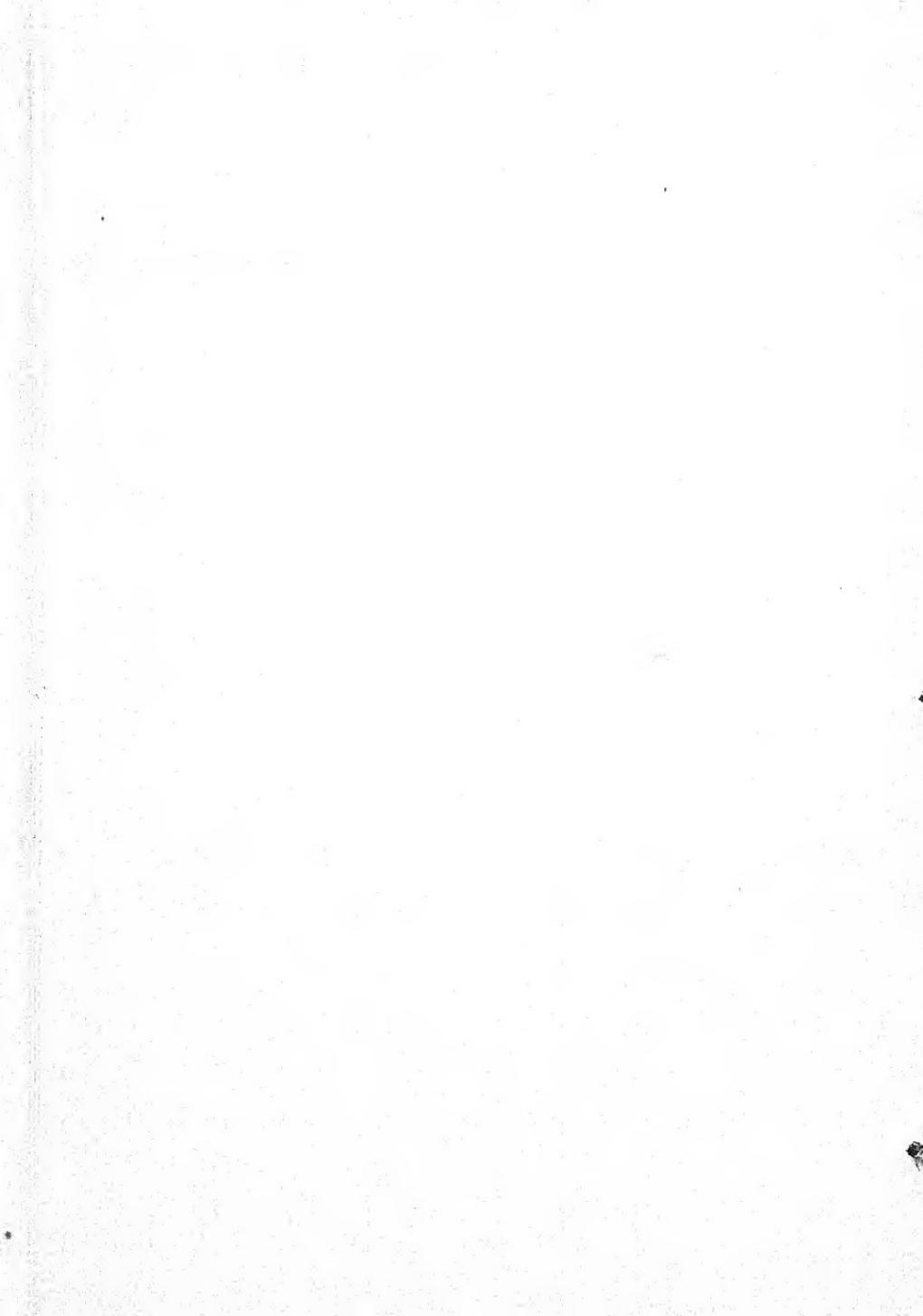
6. Disagreement was also arrived at on several other subjects such as the Services, Fundamental Rights, Commercial Discrimination, Instruments of accession for the States and of Instructions to the Governor-General.

In short, there are very few subjects on which Disagreement was not reached. If there are any, the S.O.S. is prepared to discuss them in the Joint Parliamentary Committee and arrive at further Disagreements on them.

For, although the Round Table Conference was primarily conceived and originally devised to arrive at agreements, its sole function now has been to record Disagreements. These Disagreements, described in Liberal phraseology as "loose ends," are valuable in that they provide points of contact. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar have made it clear, in their latest joint manifesto, that after three Conferences and four special Committees, the desire to appreciate each other's points of view is now at last obvious. This is,

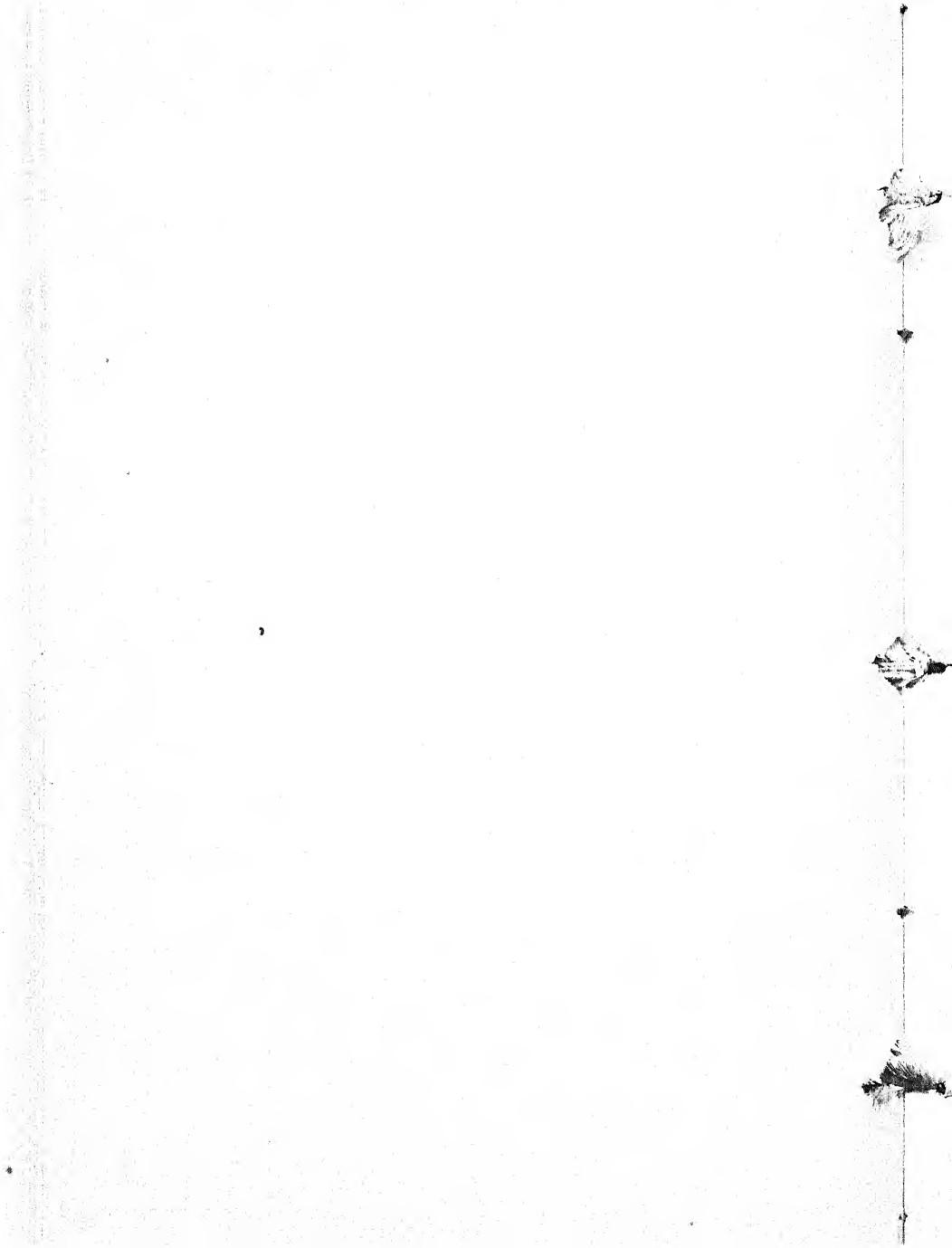
indeed, a great gain. For, though the Conference was held behind closed doors, everything about it is still open—including the minds of the Delegates.

14th January, 1933.



PART II

AFFAIRS ECONOMIC



NOTES ON ECONOMICS.

(For Beginners).

The Ratio: This is the supreme question of the moment. It appears that for some reason or other gold and silver have to be exchanged for mutual benefit. The point at which they are exchanged is called the ratio. Recently, the rupee fell down at the premises of the Currency Office (Esplanade Road, Bombay), was badly hurt and tried to rise to its feet in which effort it was assisted through purely humanitarian motives by Sir Basil Blackett who was returning from the Church Gate Street Church or Mongini's. Now the whole controversy between Sir Basil and Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas turns on the issue whether the rupee should have been helped to get up when by its own wishes (or folly) it had come down and lain flat. Sir Basil who has a natural partiality for a white coin protests that if he had not rendered first-aid, the poor thing would have completely collapsed on the pavement: Sir Purshottamdas who has a pardonable fondness for a coloured metal (resembling the hue of the sun-burnt Easterner) suggests that the rupee should have been taught the virtue of self-help. It appears that $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is an important figure in the problem, being the difference between rs. 4d. and rs. 6d. (strictly, it is a difference of two pence, however). Moreover, there is yet another point of controversy. When recently the rupee went up (or was it down?) Sir Basil suggested that it was all the doing of

Sir Purushottamdas who had brought a clever bear from the London Zoo on his return from Europe recently. It seems that this bear can devour rupees and bring down the exchange. The Bombay business-men indignantly denied this malicious allegation and said that Sir Basil had to thank his own stars as well as his own policy for the fall in exchange. It is necessary to add that there is another animal involved in this currency-exchange business apart from the bear and that is the bull. This bull was rendered superfluous after the closing of the Spanish bull-fights and was bought by a Hindu merchant of Bombay in a forward transaction. It is also said that the bull was to have been sacrificed by a sect of the Hindus; but some Muslim leaders objected to the idea of any animal sacrifice by non-Muslims and threatened to play music before temples when the sacrifice was to have been performed in all solemnity. But in view of Baron Irwin's appeal for communal peace, Sir Basil Blackett bought the bull for the Finance Department and debited the cost to the Back Bay Reclamation accounts. Rabindranath Tagore wrote the play of "Sacrifice" on this very theme.

* * * *

Back Bay Reclamation : The foregoing inevitably leads us to the Back Bay Reclamation. It might almost be called a scheme as evidence before the Mears Committee shows. Sir George Lloyd (now Baron Lloyd, though that makes no difference to the scheme he inaugurated) who has been given a peerage not because he made Bombay barren but to avoid the usual confusion in India between his name and that of Mr. Lloyd George—another individual altogether—conceived the

grand idea of the scheme. His expert Sir George Buchanan, whom he chose because his Christian name was the same, agreed with Sir George Lloyd that the scheme was not only huge and great but might quite likely succeed. Thus came about the scheme for which, according to Sir Lawless Hepper, Sir George Buchanan is responsible and according to Sir George, Sir Lawless is responsible. (With a rare humility none of them wants to take the credit now). The cost of the scheme is—well, none of them knows precisely and no one is petty or short-sighted enough to calculate; for having to pay nothing they face the question of expense with philosophic equanimity and resolute purpose. The arithmetic of the experts and the administrators who dealt with it needs, however, to be brushed up since on Sir Henry Lawrence's own showing, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad made some trifling mistake of a cipher or so in calculating the profits. Thus neither on the side of expenditure nor of revenue is anybody certain of the figures. But it's a noble scheme altogether.

November, 1926.

IMPRESSIONS ON DEPRESSION.

Pace the *Statesman*, I saw several prominent merchants, distinguished industrialists, extinguished nonentities, celebrated anonymities, exalted economists and exhausted businessmen to gather their views on the prevailing trade depression which is *the* topical subject. From the Governor of Bengal to the Governor of the Belgian Bank, everyone is discussing it. Presidents of Chambers of Commerce are analysing it. Why not find the whole truth and nothing but the truth about it? Like Diogenes I was in search of one just economist who like Socrates was prepared to drink, if not poison, at least Scotch Whisky and soda—in a sort of prohibitionist way—for the sake of his convictions. I found, however, to my dismay that the Clive Street is literally crowded with throngs of Daniels come to judgment—in economic matters.

* * * *

I shall not reveal the identities of my “interviewees” except, of course, that their names and addresses could be obtained by sending one anna stamp to me, care of the Editor—provided the Editor does not handle the envelope including the stamp. A prominent merchant—all merchants I interview are prominent or become so—whom I saw told me that trade was “so depressed—so depressed and we, too, are so depressed by the trade-depression that at this rate there is every danger of our being regarded as depressed classes at no distant date.”

"Well, then at least there will be some efforts made by the Government to elevate and alleviate your condition," I consoled him, "You might even have a representative at the Oval-Table Conference before it's over."

* * * *

Another Clive Street industrialist, whose office is in Muktaram Babu Street, was not so pessimistic. He took a philosophic, far-sighted and deep-breathing view of the whole matter. "We all have to suffer temporarily, you know," he said.

I knew it and so I nodded.

"It is a temporary phase which we have temporarily to put up with and it is due only to temporary decline in trade owing to a purely temporary world-depression : I mean the depression is temporary, not the world. Nothing in this present depression is permanent—not even the poverty or misery it entails. All such depressions are temporary, being succeeded by booms which are followed by depressions. This is called a trade cycle in economics and the wheel of chance in philosophy. Our Government cannot be expected to deal with such temporary exigencies. They can only deal with eternal causes and evils like illiteracy, child-marriage, sedition, locust-pest and the domiciled community. For some of them, however, they have no funds—owing to temporary causes like trade-depression and political movement ; and for others, notably social matters, Indian traditions and customs are responsible so that the Government cannot interfere therein."

I said, "In the long run it is true, everything will turn out right. But by the time the run is over, we all might be over."

With a temporary loss of temper, he replied, "You are short-sighted. Go to an oculist or an optician or the Finance Department of the Government of India."

* * * *

An ex-orator of the Albert Hall was passionate in his eloquence. He was full of pathos—and of bathos. "The pitch darkness of trade-depression does not seem to turn a corner. The faint glimmerings of a trade revival have not still blossomed forth into a full-blown spring. What I mean is things are not improving. The Government are as helpless as King Canute—they cannot prevent the onward rush of the torrent of trade decline. They cannot say 'Thus far—and no farther.' Trade, like time and tide, waits for none. The Government have not even the consolation of having courtiers like Canute who gave him the hope that he could turn back the tide. It is only the opponents and critics of the Government who are egging them on to check the tide. Britannia rules the waves and waives the rules but even she cannot check the tide of trade. Truth to tell, our rulers have been conquered by the ruled. They attribute this trade-depression to world-causes beyond their control—beyond anybody's control, in fact. Things just happen. Nobody can do anything, everybody is helpless. World-cause is the fundamental evil, the root of the trouble and the foot of the matter. It is as primeval as the original sin committed in the Garden of Eden, as universal and

inscrutable as the weather, as vast and powerful as Nature or God. You can no more understand these world-causes than you can comprehend the secret of creation. *Kismet!!* We must sacrifice goats at Kali Temple—or preferably at the Royal Exchange Place—to propitiate this holy and great and inviolable Unseen Power called the World-Cause.”

* * * *

I went straight to a Professor of Economics who is, even according to himself, a recognised authority on currency and exchange and other cognate subjects like bullion and reserves. “The whole trouble of what is popularly called trade-depression but is technically known as maladjustment of gold movement relative to price fluctuation is due to currency and exchange,” he told me.

I observed that the subject of currency and exchange is not properly understood by those who have no currency to exchange for the goods of the world or who are popularly called the poor.

He demurred. “In the whole world, there are only three people who understand currency problems. Prof. Gustav Cassel, Prof. J. M. Keynes and-well-and—” he said.

Seeing his confusion, I put in, “And yourself.”

Blushing academically, he replied smilingly, “Well, *you* might say so but I can’t. Neither Sir Purshottamdas nor Prof. K. T. Shah nor even Mr. C. S. Rangaswami understands one jot about currency. Bombay capitalists described reverse councils as organised loot and ratio as plunder forgetful of the fact that exchange is no robbery.”

When I mildly hinted that my object was to find out the truth about trade-depression, not about other people's knowledge, he came back to the subject. "The so-called depression is due to a so-called decline in commodity prices which is the result of a so-called return to gold. This was a fatal mistake. People should not have returned to gold; they could have returned to paper or silver or copper or zinc or even nature but to return to gold spelt disaster."

As I had not the ghost of an idea as to who returned to gold from where and where this gold was confined and why it could not be fetched instead of people returning to it like Mohamed after the mountain, I naively inquired, "But what has that got to do with trade-depression?"

"Why, everything," he said. "You see, when gold touches the lower point, prices tend to rise or—let me see—do they fall? In any case, they either rise or fall which affects exports or imports or perhaps both. At any rate, these lower and higher gold points are of great importance to trade. Exchange moves between them and prices fluctuate accordingly. Now although cold contracts and heat expands, currency in India expands in the cold weather and contracts in the hot weather because economic laws are the reverse of physical laws. Do you know Gresham's Law that bad money drives away good?"

"Yes," I said "that is why false coins are so much in evidence now-a-days."

"And do you know, a Bank must have both frozen and fluid resources?"

"I know that the Central Bank in Calcutta has got excellent tube-well water but I did not know it had Refrigerators," I answered.

But he continued, "As gold and silver have to be exchanged for mutual benefit, the point at which they perform this operation is called the ratio. It is, however, a ratio without proportion. The effect of this gold point on prices will now be evident to you. If with the exchange at 1-3 17/18, a maund of bran sells at say Rs. 2/8—I am taking only a rough estimate—then a maund of husk will fetch a better price—or, perhaps, slightly less—when the exchange is a little lower. It is because of this that the price of mustard seed is decimal point eight per maund less now than the price of copra seven years ago; and sesamum in Murshidabad sells sixth of a pice more than wheat in Chittagong. Prices are intimately related to currency and exchange, you will see."

I saw it.

* * * *

This discussion increased my appetite for more economic facts and particularly statistics. I became mad after statistics. I went to a publicist of reputation in financial matters. He was emphatic that trade-depression was due to over-production. "We have produced too much of everything including gas," he said.

"Can you give me figures?" I asked.

"Certainly," he said, "Do you know the rate at which production of rubber has increased during the last two years? Well—it is—er—I don't remember the exact—figure—but well—it's something tremen-

ous. And do you know the percentage of increase in tin in recent years? Well-er-well-I forget the precise percentage but I have got it at my office and it is also something colossal. You will now understand how production is increasing at a stupendous rate. Prices are tumbling down; they are not even rock-bottom because no one knows whether there is any bottom to the rock."

"What is the remedy?" I asked.

"It is plain. We must ruthlessly rationalise our industries, cut down costs and cheapen production."

"But I thought you said that prices are already too low and there are more goods produced than we need."

"It is true but then I put my faith in homeopathy and believe in curing a malady by an injection of its germs."

But I still wanted light, more light and further light and I have, therefore, applied to the Calcutta Electric Corporation.

1st November, 1930.

ALL-ROUND EXPLOITATION.

A correspondent who considers himself "valued" but cannot claim to be "eminent" writes :—

It appears tremendous commotion is worked up in Clive Street and Chowringhee over some controversy about the exploitation of Bengal by Bombay. Oppressed by the April heat, which was as premature as it was abnormal, the redoubtable "Friend of India" with no political stunt to fall back upon hit upon the excellent device of a "Wake Up Campaign." It was not an inappropriate beginning of the "Silly Season." Bengalees were asked to wake up; in fact, they were warned not to go to sleep at all. Recent recruits to the Delhi Assembly, thanks to Congress boycott of Legislatures, were cajoled to give profound interviews which were, according to prior arrangement, blessed and applauded in the editorial columns. But after three days of consecutive insomnia and nightmare induced by "waking up" too long and too late, the great campaign fizzled out. The mighty warriors who had suddenly emerged from their rather obscure and obsolete camps retired covered with honour, glory—and the mud they had thrown. The inter-provincial card is only one in the imperial game, the other trump cards being the Mussalmans, the depressed classes, the Princes and the British commercial interests. But this card was played out despite the trick.

Last week Mr. S. K. Bhatter, the President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce revived the dying embers of this controversy. And that irrepressible champion

of all anti-national causes and reactionary movements, Mr. R. S. Sarma, C.I.E., M.L.A., was, it seems, present there to defend as well as offend. Mr. Bhatter's speech was vehement; and I understand that his expression of the readiness of Non-Bengalees to be burnt at Nimtolla Ghat evoked spontaneous and loud cheers from the gathering. Why this outburst of enthusiasm to die? People should have at least the right to die where they please or where Fate ordains them, although this right has not been included among the fundamental rights in the recent Karachi Congress resolution. A pessimist was of opinion that the present abnormal trade depression is responsible for this widespread inclination towards Nimtolla Ghat, while a cynic remarked that the eagerness might be for sending rival businessmen there. But this is a digression. For this effort, Mr. Bhatter earned a double-column distinction in the *Statesman*, hitherto reserved for Viceroys, Civil Disobedience Movement, Aeroplane Disasters, Lancashire wails and sundry rebellions. Mr. Sarma appeared therein as a stout defender of the *Statesman* whose name, I am told, was never once actually mentioned by him or any other speaker although in the report it occurs more than once—for obvious reasons.

Mr. Bhatter touched on the abuse of the term "exploitation." He could have gone further. It is exploitation if Bombay cloth is sold in Bengal; it is *not* exploitation but normal trade if Lancashire sells it to Bengal. The other provinces "gain" at the expense of Bengal if Bengal consumes their goods: but British manufacturers and traders only perform a

necessary economic service by doing so. One would have thought that the case is precisely the reverse and that it is only when one country dumps goods on another through advantages derived from political relationship and by methods which are unfair and discriminatory that the question of exploitation arises. We do not hear that Lancashire "exploits" Cornwall and Devonshire by selling cotton piece-goods to the latter or Newcastle "exploits" London by selling coal or Sheffield "exploits" the other counties through its iron and steel industry.

We are fast reaching a *reductio ad absurdum* in the Protectionist case; and the benevolent and disinterested philanthropists of Clive Street, whose sole anxiety is for the welfare of Bengal (*minus* her politicians, detenus, business competitors and Calcutta Corporation) are trying not only to kill a few birds with a stone but to have the stone back.

This is not, however, the stone which they give us when we ask for bread. But that is by the way.

To return to the *reductio ad absurdum*. If this bogey of protection of one province against another goes on, we shall soon have not only Eastern and Western Bengal raising tariff walls against each other but 24 Pargannas will complain that they are being "exploited" by Mymensingh (from where, I believe, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker hails !) and Midnapur will protest against its "exploitation" by Dacca. And if the districts, why not the towns? Why not Krishnanagar have a "Wake up Campaign" against Khustia and why not Chittagong have an all-night vigil (not for police but for industrial purposes) against the

onslaught of Commilla? But why stop at towns? There is already a feeling that Burra Bazar "exploits" Ballygunge and Bhowanipur "exploits" Tollygunge. And a "Wake up Campaign" in Alipur is long overdue, particularly because the Burra Sahebs and the Chota Sahebs who stay there in dilapidated huts live on one meal per day (the other meal being taken at Firpo's and Peliti's) and because even when they wake up all night as on St. Andrew's Day, that is done in Chowringhee and not in Alipur. Ultimately, therefore, we reach our own homes and selves and I intend to build up a long, strong and high tariff wall against everybody else, a wall which will be as long as the Chinese Wall, as high as the Tower of Babylon and as strong as the advertised quality of cement.

9th May, 1931.

FROM WORLD-DEPRESSION TO PERSONAL
DEPRESSION, OR VICE VERSA.

Dear Mr. Managing Editor,

I trust the Editor will not mind my addressing this letter to you but I do so as you appear to be hobnobbing with Sir George Schuster more than he.

I have carefully read the first three paragraphs of Sir George Schuster's speech published in *Indian Finance* of the 18th April and they have not only consoled me but filled me with hope. Sir George observed that "the troubles in India to-day are troubles which (apart from the aggravation of special political causes operating in India) are common to the whole world." I could not proceed further. I instinctively felt that this is the keynote of the speech, the kernel of the problem—and there was no use my reading the whole speech or knowing what the problem was.

And is it not consoling enough? Do you know, dear Editor, the parable of Buddha and Kisagotami? You say, you cannot recollect it but I doubt if you ever knew it. However, let me recapitulate. Buddha during his wanderings met Kisagotami, a young woman who had lost her only child and came to him for a medicine to revive it. Buddha asked her to get a tola of black mustard-seed from some one who had not lost a relative and being unable to find a home where none had died, she returned disappointed to the Lord. Buddha then explained to her that she had found a bitter balm "searching for what none finds" and proceeded:

"Thou know'st the whole world weeps with thy woe,
The grief which all hearts share grows less for one."

And as He was still searching for the truth, He told her that He was searching the secret and asked her to bury her child.

Our modern Buddhas are not less ingenious, even if they are less saintly. The Finance Member finds only the ubiquitous and inscrutable "world cause" responsible for all the ills we suffer from. But not wholly. There is a parenthetical qualification—although I don't know how he *spoke* the parenthesis. If any one is at all to blame in India, it is the Congress. Congressmen, as you know, do not represent India but they have an enormous capacity for mischief. On one occasion in a local Chamber, Sir George criticised the habit of Indian public men to find fault with the Government, forgetful of their own short-comings. The habit, however, does not seem to be a monopoly of Indians—dependent as they have been on the mighty Raj all these years. At least the Finance Member wants to hold every one responsible for the present unfortunate conditions—every one except the Government of India. Perhaps this trait of castigating others is infectious and Sir George has caught the infection. He is still in search of the truth regarding currency matters—"searching for what none finds"—and so Buddha-wise asked the Federation to bury the dead past. Speculations on what might have been are fruitless, he stated. When in doubt, said Mark Twain, speak the truth. When in doubt, says the Finance Member, contract currency and blame the "world-cause."

It is, however, no small consolation for the poor in this country to know that if they are starving, the poor people of the whole world are doing the same and there is an international bond of hunger. Let them remember that their unemployment is due to an unprecedented world slump and their starvation to a world economic crisis. It is also a great comfort to learn that as the causes of this world-trouble are world-wide, and cannot be solved without world co-operation which is yet in its initial stages, we shall have to wait a long time for its solution. Lenin's dictum that every revolution should be solved without world co-operation which is yet in its theory that every financial malady is a world-malady is not only a sound economic principle but a respectable doctrine which can be freely given expression to in Government House Garden Parties and is, in fact, so stale that it has crept into the Viceroy's addresses to the Assembly and the Princes.

Incidentally, I might observe that nothing is nowadays attempted except on a world-scale. There are world records in flying, swimming, motoring, motor-boating, eating bananas, chewing gums and standing on one's head. As the Heads of Export-Import firms continually remind us, the world is being knit together. People die in Bankura because the Governor of the Bank of England quarrels with his wife and sends up the bank-rate. In fact, appeals are also exclusively made to world-opinion. I understand that after the last Round-Table Conference, a number of Indian Delegates went high up in an aeroplane to see the world as a whole and find out what effect their decisions had produced on world-opinion. They, however, went up

so high that they could see nothing. In trying to see world-opinion, we sometimes see only the opinions and not the world and on other occasions, only the world and not the opinions. Nevertheless, let us think and speak only in world-terms for it will make a world of difference in our outlook.

But Sir George's speech also fills me with a deep and inexpressible hope. I shall, however, try and express it. If "world causes" can be attributed to national misfortunes, why not give a chance to individuals? But this is already begun. "World cause" has become the inevitable excuse, the common refuge.

Last week, a friend of mine who owed me Rs. 71/- (Rupees Seventy-one only) wrote to me that he was unable to repay me "owing to world-factors over which he has no control." If New South Wales and Old Russia and Modern Turkey can repudiate their debts owing to world depression and world-causes, why cannot individuals do the same? Does the hugeness of the amount give to countries the right which is denied to individuals?

When next time the Income-Tax authorities send me a reminder, I am going to reply as follows :—

"I know that I owe to this Government not only law and order but also arrears of taxes. However, I am deeply grieved to tell you that owing to the prevalent world-depression for which neither I nor Sir George Schuster is in any way responsible, I simply cannot pay the income-tax. Your schedule is herewith returned."

I gather also that in a recent dacoity case, the dacoit who was an M.A. in Economics and had

specialised in banking and currency told the learned Magistrate that "the world-factors which brought about the present economic crisis were responsible for a wave of crime although the evil was accentuated by the civil disobedience movement; until therefore world-prices are adjusted to world-gold movements and international silver prices are stabilised and regulated, he would continue to be a victim of the world-depression and would have no option but to commit crimes." The learned Magistrate in order to prove his own learning (not only in law but in high economics) had to acquit the accused and suggested to him to approach the Bengal Chamber of Commerce (or alternately a mental hospital) for curing the world-disease from which he was suffering.

Now that world-forces are operating on all sides, we shall, I trust, not be unduly depressed by our own petty ills and misfortunes nor be unduly elated by increments in our salaries and profits in our ventures. Thus Sir George promises us a world of hopes and is himself becoming a world-figure.

Your fellow-sufferer in world-troubles,
G. L. M.

23rd May, 1931.

ECONOMICS MADE EASY.

Everything is now being made easy from the Radio to Relativity in the interests of the man-in-the-street or the average citizen or the ordinary newspaper-reader who might more simply and shortly be called a "boob." (In Economics he is called the Economic Man). When *Indian Finance* was started, its conductors made a praiseworthy effort to enlighten the general public with the help of a few simple and snappy definitions such as "call-money is money which you can call your own." But since then they have themselves got deeper and deeper into the quagmire of technical jargon and have failed to initiate the public—or that part of it which is lucky enough to read *Indian Finance*—into the elements of economics and the mysteries of public finance. The result is disastrous as any leading article of a leading daily on economic subject indicates. There is a vague impression abroad that "Council Bills" are bills which members of the Secretary of State's Council are unable to meet and which have, therefore, to be paid by the Secretary of State himself to sundry creditors after drawing on the Indian Treasury; and that "Reverse Councils" reverse the process so that the Government of India draw on the India Office for paying the debts of their Executive Councillors. Nor is it generally known that the Public Debt is not owed by the public or that the Gold Standard Reserve has no gold in it or that a Sinking Fund does not sink. It is also not generally understood that what is called the Ratio has

no proportion (unlike as in Algebra) nor the Ratio controversialists a sense of proportion. Hence it is essential to educate the educated public in economic science. Here is a well-meaning but humble beginning.

Political Economy began in India since the advent of the East India Company when the hoarded wealth of the Nabobs was sent to England and Lancashire piece-goods were brought into India. The former is called *exports* and the latter *imports*. Later, when Universities were (unfortunately) started in cities with the nearest Governor as Chancellor, Political Economy gave birth to a new species called *Indian Economics*. This does not mean that Economic Laws do not operate in India or that they operate differently from those in other countries because economists are not yet agreed as to what are the Laws in economics or whether these Laws operate or whether there are any Economic Laws at all (see below).

Political Economy does not deal with *Politics* which is a different science (or art) and is practised by politicians. Political Economy does not also deal with *Economy* because economy, like religion, is to be preached and not practised. The poor cannot, and the rich will not, practise it : the former owing to lack of means, the latter owing to lack of will (See Chapter on Will in W. James' Psychology).

There are two kinds of Economy—Private and Public.

Private Economy. Economy when practised in private by others is called *miserliness* and by ourselves *thrift*. Similarly, Non-Economy in one-self is called maintaining one's *standard of life* and in others *extra-*

vagance. Banks, however, advocate thrift for the sake of home savings deposits. Things to which one is accustomed are called *necessaries* but when demanded by others less well-placed in life, they are called *luxuries*. Thus the possession of a Rolls-Royce by a rich man is a necessary according to his standard of life but the desire for a harmonium by a poor man is a desire for luxury.

Public Economy. This is unknown in Indian Economics except by fits and starts at times of crises when it becomes impossible to ignore it. When crises occur (See Taussig) which happens pretty frequently now-a-days, Public Economy is pursued in two ways. Committees are appointed to effect economy, the result being the Geddes Axe and the Inchcape Rock (See Poetry). Secondly, peons and Indian clerks are dispensed with in the interests of economy without loss of efficiency. This is called retrenchment which leads to unemployment which, in its turn, is uneconomic. But according to the Laws of *Indian Economics* (not yet finally placed on the Statute-book) the unemployed in India are also uneconomic and have not the right to live. Suicide is, therefore, an economic process and it is satisfactory that this is becoming popular in India. The Government (whose officials are already on starvation wages) propose to introduce a bill in the present session of the Legislative Assembly legalising suicide. This will open up a new way of reducing *Population* which worries the *Statesman*, Sir J. C. Coyajee and the ghost of Malthus (author of Law of Malthus).

On the whole, therefore, it is difficult to know what precisely Political Economy deals with and

whether it deals with anything at all. There is, however, a widespread belief that it has some general relation to the question of making money—although very few millionaires have read Marshall.

Indian Economics is a special branch of Political Economy which applies to the whole world in general but to no country in particular. Thus there is a science of Chinese Economics and of Honolulu Economics which apply the general Economic Laws (which are still to be discovered and enunciated) to the special conditions of China or Honolulu—whatever those conditions might be. Indian Economics has important consequences. For example, it proves that reduction in military expenditure is risky because of the disturbed conditions of the world and the Frontier, but that expenditure in providing military training to Indians is an extravagance because disarmament is in the air (See Aeroplanes) in Geneva. Indian Economics also shows that while prices rise when the emoluments of civil services are to be increased, they fall at the same time so far as the pay of the subordinates and the imposition of fresh taxation are concerned.

Indian Economics is useful because if you quote the *Economics* part of it, the Government can lay stress on the *Indian* part of it and point out that Indian conditions are very different and analogies of other countries are not applicable to India. On the other hand, if you emphasise the *Indian* part of it, the Government triumphantly show the *Economics* part of it, quote Economic Laws (See above) and declare that similar measures failed in other countries and the analogy has a moral for India. In fact, if anything is warranted

by Economic Laws, conditions in India prohibit it ; and if Indian conditions demand some measure, Economic Laws forbid its adoption. All Finance and Commerce Members are deeply versed in Indian Economics.

Indian Economics is divided into three parts : (1) Indian Land ; (2) Indian Capital ; and (3) Indian Labour.

Indian Land is at present sold for a song. You have simply to stand on a piece of Land, as Stephen Leacock (Professor of Economics) says somewhere, and sing. The louder you sing, the cheaper you can get the land. What a pity you and I cannot sing ?

Indian Capital. Capital is what you want and have to raise ; but Indian capital is proverbially shy —the proverb having been coined by Sir Thomas Holland or Lord Lloyd. It is as shy as a bashful newly-wedded Hindu bride—if you happen to have married one. (See my forthcoming “Child India”—a Reply to “Mother-in-Law England”). Indian Capital is so shy that like a shy horse when it once slips away from your hand, it cannot be caught. Hence the saying “Money makes the Mare go.” I am not yet on speaking terms with Indian capital owing to this shyness. Few people can be intimate with it. On the contrary, foreign capital is not shy ; it is almost shameless. It is nearly guilty of soliciting at times and makes gestures (Compare the Indian Penal Code).

The capital which you require to *float* companies is called *liquid* or *fluid* capital because according to the laws of Physics (discovered by Newton and amended recently by Sir C. V. Raman), bodies cannot *float* on solid matters so that liquid substance is essential. Com-

panies once floated go on floating until they sink; for which purpose, sinking funds are provided according to Company Laws (See Shamdasani). Even without sinking funds, some companies produce a sinking feeling among share-holders and directors which is known only to company-promoters and swimmers.

A well-known modern form of capital is *credit* which is obtained by signing cheques on banks. The more cheques you can sign, the greater your credit—except when you get discredit. But the Central Banking Inquiry Committee has not solved the central problem of banking which needed enquiry, namely, the provision of overdraft.

The only body which cannot rely on credit is the Government of India and it has, therefore, to incur what is called the *Public Debt of India* (not to be confused with a book of that name). The roots of the Public Debt are strictly private. The Public Debt is kept in the vaults of the Imperial Bank and is never paid off either because the Government do not want to take credit (for anything) or for fear of Economic Laws which require a Government to be always indebted to somebody or other.

Indian Labour. Labour is what you want other people to do for you. This is the object of *organisation*. The more you can shove your work on others, the greater organising capacity you are supposed to have. Indian labour is called inefficient because it is cheap. If the wages of Indian Labour are increased, they are dissipated in drink, gambling and other vices including *luxury* (See above) which is obnoxious to their employers who are all tee-totalers, never go to

races, or play cards for money, are paragons of virtue and spend only on *necessaries* (See above).

When Land, Capital and Labour co-operate by capitalists and labourers competing with one another, *National Wealth* is produced. National wealth is the sum total of individual wealth of all the people in the land (including those in sea and air at the time of calculation) *minus* cross obligations of nationals to one another to avoid double counting and *minus* a number of other items (too numerous to mention because I can't remember them at the moment) which cancel each other out. In fact, it is not yet finally decided by Economists as to how to calculate national wealth. This makes it all the more important and mystifying.

(Note : The above article was written prior to the recent crisis by which England has gone off the Gold Standard, India has gone up the sterling exchange and banks have observed compulsory holidays. I have got definite views on this crisis which I am unfortunately unable to put forward. I am not in a position to be interviewed for want of an interviewer. Not even the temptation of a cup of tea has induced or seduced the Editor of this journal to interview me. Therefore, for the present, at least this week, the world will have to pull on and the Finance Member and bankers will have to carry on without having the advantage of knowing my considered opinion).

26th September, 1931.

RESURRECTED FROM WASTE-PAPER BASKET.

The other day when I paid a surprise visit to the office of this journal, I chanced to find a number of letters to the Editor—the last refuge of an aggrieved modern citizen—in the waste-paper basket of the office. Needless to say, the letters were in all the corners of the room, on the tables and the chairs and at every possible place because the waste-paper basket in this office is conceived in a broad sense of the term and is decentralised since the residual powers are widely distributed. I have rescued this invaluable literature from an impending oblivion and, after a careful selection, have decided to publish the letters in this very journal. The correspondence refers, of course, to the present financial and commercial crisis.

I

GOLD AND SILENCE.

To

THE EDITOR,

Indian Finance.

I regret that despite my importunate entreaties coupled with subtle threats, you have refused to interview me on the present crisis. Let me assure you that I know more about gold nagging, sterling pegging, rupee lagging and money begging than all those

who talk about it. Along with the leader-writers of all the papers as well as those who gave interviews and issued statements on the three fateful days following this incident, I had foreseen England's going off the gold standard long ago. Only, in common with them, I had forgotten to mention it—even to myself. But, as you know, silence is golden; and as a matter of reciprocity widely advocated now-a-days, gold standard demands silence.

Nopitum Morem (Latin for No More!)

Yours, etc.,

A DISAPPOINTED INTERVIEWEE.

II

SAVE OUR GOLD.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The other day I went to a dentist to have my tooth filled with gold but he absolutely refused to do so. He said we are off the gold standard and are now linked to sterling. He said he felt all the twenty-four hours since September last that he had been linked to sterling. He owed a duty to the Finance Member and could fill the tooth only with sterling if I wanted to. If I desired to have the tooth filled with gold, I was asked to await the restoration of the gold standard in England and linking the rupee to the gold. But at present, he said, everyone of us is linked to sterling.

Am I right, Sir, when I say that in the Economics of the Physiocrats, this theory of linking of the rupee is called the theory of Missing Link? Can I, Sir, under these circumstances, use gold links (made of

rolled gold), gold tie-pins, gold frames for glasses and gold watches?

If I keep them at home, would I not be guilty of hoarding, the worst economic crime of the day, worse even than being a spendthrift?

As an alternative, have I to tender all these golden and gold-edged commodities to the Controller of the Currency for refilling the depleted gold reserves and winning his golden opinion in return?

I am really in distress and the gold that I tender will be distress gold in the strictest sense of the term.

I am willing to rise to the occasion for providing an effective metallic backing to Sir George Schuster, who, I understand, is worried because rats eat away the Paper Currency from his Reserve. Only show me where and how I can rise, lest I might fall—along with the exchange.

If I miss this golden opportunity, I may only lose an opportunity but Sir George and the country will lose the gold.

Yours distressfully,

PATRIOTIC DUTY.

III

GIVE US FIGURES.

Dear Sir,

I was one of those who devoured both the Rotary lunch and the speech of Mr. C. S. Rangaswami, the ex-pessimist and a converted optimist. He exposed

the subject, I mean, he gave an exposition of the subject which was as lucid as it was lurid.

Listening to his reply, I was simply overwhelmed by the magnitude of the figures he quoted and the ease with which he hurled them at the dumb-founded audience. He never went below a million in any of his figures; and I felt that the more billions of pounds and dollars he gave us—in his speech, I mean—the better.

I was a bit drowsy after the lunch and if he had quoted four times the figures for currency circulation in America, I would not have objected and it would have impressed us all still more. Permit me to say he was needlessly restrained and modest in this respect.

The possible objection that such figures would have been incorrect seems to me too technical. Statistics are required to stun and I trust Mr. Rangaswami will get over the punctilio of quoting relevant and correct figures when he speaks next time.

My only criticism is that his optimism was a little too depressing; at the end of the lecture, I came out a sadder but not a wiser man.

*

Yours deferentially,
A CHEERFUL PESSIMIST.

IV

STAND BY THE RUPEE

SIR,

Sir George Schuster, the Finance Member, speaking from his place (which is not very enviable at present) in the Assembly last month, asked us all to

stand by the rupee! I am quite prepared to respond and co-operate but where are the rupees to stand by?

At present the rupee neither stands nor sits but only slips away—from the safe no less than the pocket. Will you kindly write to Sir George and ask him to send me a few rupees so that I can place them beside me and stand by them or even sit near them? (Is it, Sir, because of the Standing Committees of the Assembly that he asked us only to stand by)?

For the present, I have got only a few pices and annas but as a gesture of responsive co-operation, I am standing by them and I propose to continue to do so until you send me down those rupees to stand by.

Whatever it be in the international sphere, in personal affairs, the one solid economic fact to-day is *the flight of the rupee—from ourselves*. Check that and your financial malady is cured. Give us the Rupee and we will stand by it!

Yours, etc.,

A DEVOTEE OF THE RUPEE.

WANTED—CONFIDENCE.

SIR,

I agree with those who urge that the supreme need of the hour is confidence. Confidence and more confidence—that is what we need.

I have myself begun to read Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help* and am taking correspondence courses in development of confidence (at 8 dollars for a course) besides

learning what are usually called a few confidence-tricks to inspire confidence.

But I have a few minor difficulties. They are no doubt trivial like difficulties of humbler people, compared to the difficulties of big persons which are called problems. But let me place them frankly before you because I believe that even during the present slump of prices, frankness pays.

My question is two-fold : (i) Who are the people who should have confidence and (ii) In whom or in what should they have confidence?

Personally, whenever I meet anybody now-a-days, I feel terribly diffident, whether he wants to borrow from me or I from him. Even changing a ten rupee note or buying a razor makes me diffident. In fact, I am thinking of growing a beard because of this lack of self-confidence in purchasing the requisite gear of annihilation.

To revert to the question of confidence, however. I presume that the people who should have confidence are those foreign investors who have invested money in India and they should have confidence in the ability of the Government of India to secure them their dues. Thus, the Credit of the Government of India (for abbreviation called Credit of India) is the chief thing; and those who should have confidence must have confidence in what is technically called the Credit of India (maintained by means of the Public Debt). Now, I think, the meaning of the noble but rather ambiguous word "Confidence" will be clear. It means the confidence of foreign investors that the British Government in India can ensure them what that great econo-

mist Shylock called their "pound of flesh" (equal to interest *plus* profits *plus* unearned increment).

I have great confidence in the Finance Member who, I am sure, has complete confidence in Sir Henry Strakosch who has confidence in the Governor of the Bank of England who disseminates confidence all-round.

But the trouble is that many of those whose business it is to have confidence in this system which is based on mutual confidence have no confidence in themselves. They have lost the capacity both to place confidence and to inspire it. Let them take to Virol and practise Sandow.

Yours Confidentially,
CONQUER DIFFIDENCE.

31st October, 1931.

AT OTTAWA.

A FORECAST.

(i)

Ottawa, July 15th.

Great preparations are being made and widespread enthusiasm prevails about the Imperial Economic Conference which is to commence here to-morrow.

The Conference is expected to last two to three weeks during which it will eat twelve dinners and eight luncheons and attend two receptions and one At Home.

The representatives of India will be on a footing of perfect equality with other Empire delegates and will not sit on lower chairs. They will be allowed to rub shoulders with their fellow-delegates.

If the members feel exhausted by the overcrowded programme of dinners and sports, the Conference will be prolonged by another week and keep itself very busy.

The procedure of the Conference will be settled on the first day but it is expected that subjects of imperial importance will be discussed when speeches will be made and specific questions will be referred to special sub-committees which will co-opt experts. The sub-committees will have the advantage of a detailed study of technical problems and also of providing leisure to the delegates to devote themselves to wider study and recreation.

The delegates will have ample opportunities of attending pictures and revues but it must be pointed out in this connection that cinema-visiting has an imperial object in view, namely, the development of the Empire-film industry.—(*Reuter's Special Service*).

Ottawa, July 15th.

The Delegates to the Conference are arriving one by one as they were bound to.

The Delegation from South Africa, when interviewed, expressed complete faith in the future of Imperial unity on the basis of the Statute of Westminster which permitted secession. General Hertzog appealed to the coloured races in the Empire to sacrifice their all for the economic power and progress of the Commonwealth. He added that the Delegation hoped not only to find new markets for South African coal but also to have a very nice time of it while in Canada.

The Australian Delegates observed that the Conference met at a very critical time in the history of the Empire and Australia looked forward to it for pushing Australian products, including wheat, in empire markets. The Australian Delegation believed in full-blooded protection and a severely rigid immigration policy but had unbounded confidence in imperial brotherhood and were keen on the use of empire-made razors.

The New Zealand Delegation were of opinion that Canadian prairies were the best places for making people think imperially.—(*Reuter*).

London, July 15th.

The *Times*, in a leading article, declares that the Conference is historic. "It meets when the world is crying for removal of tariff barriers," the paper observes; "it is, therefore, the duty of the British Commonwealth of Nations—the like of which the world has never seen and is not likely to see—to give a lead to other nations by establishing an Imperial Zollverein within which there would be no restrictions about buying or selling except such as are required in the interest of each of the constituent units."

The paper remarks that the hopes and ideals inspiring the Delegates have always been the bed-rock of the Empire and concludes that when so much good-will and mutual trust are exhibited, the results are bound to be of a fruitful nature as empire fruits will be exchanged, and of a far-reaching consequence since the consequences will reach as far as another Conference of its kind.

The *Morning Post* welcomes the Conference and observes that it is not a mere question of preferring condensed milk made in the Empire but of seeing that the milk of imperial kindness is not condensed. It says that the Empire has a great future only if the policy of George III is revived and adds that the Indian masses who are very ignorant and illiterate are very enthusiastic about preferential duties especially on cotton textile goods.—(*British Official Wireless*).

Ottawa, July 16th.

The Imperial Economic Conference opened this morning amidst scenes of animation and excitement.

Despite inclement and threatening weather, a huge crowd of school-boys and school-girls gathered near the place and cheered all the Delegates, without, of course, recognising them.

The Conference unanimously elected Mr. Thomas as the President amidst acclamation and the singing of "For, he's a jolly good fellow" and cries of "Dear old Jim."—(Reuter).

Ottawa, July 16th.

Mr. Thomas addressed the Conference in a short and eloquent speech which carried the audience off its feet (though the Delegates continued to occupy their seats) by its sincerity, firm grasp of facts and broad sympathy. Mr. Thomas declared that the Commonwealth of British Nations is not a myth but a fact and a fact of which the world will have to take account for a very long time to come (*Applause*).

He stated that the Empire was destined to last till the Day of Judgment or Eternity whichever came later. (*Loud Cheers*).

He assured the delegates that an excellent luncheon would be served after to-day's session and there was, therefore, no reason to despair or be pessimistic but that they should face the future (it was only a question of a couple of hours now) with hope and confidence (*Loud and prolonged applause*).

With imperial goodwill and a genuine desire to reach the solution, they would clear all difficulties and misunderstandings though, of course, there was no

difficulty about the continuity of the Empire nor did any misunderstandings exist between Britain and the Dominions.

Mr. Thomas dealt in detail with the peculiar and several problems of each Dominion and emphasised that these problems were, in essence, the same.

Although they were all animated by the imperial spirit, they all wanted to sell more and buy less. They should, therefore, organise the Empire as an economic unit wherein they would all sell more to one another and buy less. If other markets were surfeited, they should sell more to the natives of Asia and Africa who were under their trusteeship. He said that India will have the privilege to have the first place in the scheme of Imperial Preference which will benefit all parts of the Empire and added that India does not stand in need of inclusion in any scheme of Imperial migration as it was against her historic traditions and immemorial customs to emigrate.—(Reuter).

Ottawa, July 16.

Speaking after lunch, the various Dominion representatives thanked Mr. Thomas for his good wishes and Canada for the welcome. They reciprocated the common desire to co-operate for the growth and prosperity of the Empire and expressed their appreciation of the admirable apple-tart and wines served at the luncheon.

Sir Atul Chatterjee, speaking on behalf of the Indian Delegation, said : "The echoes of the generous and warm-hearted reception accorded to my colleagues

and myself will reverberate throughout the length and breadth of the vast continent which you and we are united in calling India and will kindle new hopes for the economic glory of the Empire.

"It is said that the Sun never sets on the British Empire and here I am, a son of the Empire, rising from my seat to exchange Imperial greetings and continue my mite to achieve Imperial ends. (*Applause*).

"We are prepared, if necessary, to let go the minor question of emigration to other parts of the Empire for the privilege and the benefit of being included in a regime of preferential tariffs (*Cheers*)."

Sir P. Ginwalla, who followed, said that if India still needed a British steel-frame, in the happy phrase of Mr. Lloyd George, to guide her on the path of ordered progress—he was almost tempted to say ordinated progress—she equally needed British steel to build up her industrial structure.

Mr. Shanmukham Chetty warned that what India wanted was not preference but reciprocity. He wanted that Indians should have the right to start cotton mills in Lancashire, shipping companies in Liverpool and steel works in Sheffield in return for permitting the same privileges to Britishers or other Dominion nationals in India. He said that difference in economic conditions or even the fact that two countries were on a competitive basis so far as industrial development was concerned, was no bar to reciprocity. He believed in the principle but wanted the details of a programme to be settled by sub-committees. He was not afraid if, in its actual working out, it did not differ from a preferential regime.

Sir George Rainy said that the Indian masses had hearts of gold but it was a pity that the Government could not take advantage of the present bullion market and export them. That would strengthen not only the credit position of the Government of India but also the sterling which should be the foundation of the imperial monetary system. Sir George Rainy concluded that after all even the mighty Empire must put aside something for the rainy day.

Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon said that Mussalmans in India believed in preference—imperial, national, communal, sectional and individual preference. He hoped that in any scheme of Imperial Preference, the rights of the minority communities would be specially safeguarded and Sind would be regarded as an Imperial sphere of influence.—(Reuter).

(ii)

Ottawa, July 17.

When the Imperial Economic Conference discussed the problem of naval resources of the Empire and the possibility of different parts contributing to the upkeep of an Imperial Naval Fleet, the Conference met in *camera*; but it is reported that the whole Conference burst out into a solemn singing of "Rule Britannia" led by Mr. Thomas in which the Indian Delegates enthusiastically joined.

The rumour spread by some Irish correspondents that when the military question was taken up, the Conference members sang "It's a long way to Tipperary" is authoritatively contradicted.

The Conference divided itself into various sub-committees which will go into technical questions and present draft reports which will be accepted and passed by the Conference.

There is one Sub-Committee to enquire into the question of the cultivation, export, import, sale, purchases, distribution and consumption of bananas within the Empires. Another Sub-Committee has been established to investigate the possibility and the most suitable method of compiling figures for Imperial purposes; a third one for arriving at uniformity in Imperial goods; a fourth one to study the subject of the conservation and rearing of mules; and yet another for suggesting the ways and means of establishing an Imperial Circus for educative purposes containing all-Empire animals and performers.—(*Reuter*).

Ottawa, July 25.

The Conference is in full swing. All the Delegates have left Ottawa. Some have gone to study the countryside of Canada and others to visit the United States. Sir Atul Chatterjee played golf with the Canadian Trade Commissioner. Sir George Rainy went fishing in the company of the representatives of the Federation of British Industries and caught a big fish. Sir George Schuster, who is here to advise the Indian Delegation (and incidentally make the Indian Exchequer pay for his holiday), is down with a chill and is taking complete rest. (He could not accompany Sir George Rainy.) The Australian Premier went for a sea-bath and returned refreshed.

The Sub-Committees are working hard and despite minor difficulties, excellent temper prevailed in all the deliberations.—(Reuter).

Ottawa, August 10.

All the Sub-Committees have prepared their draft reports which are embodied in resolutions to be passed by the full Conference.

It is officially stated that Sub-Committee No. 1, which is popularly known as the Banana Sub-Committee, had to listen to the joke of "We have no bananas" and the members had to laugh in order to preserve the solidarity of the Empire. Seth Haroon was nearly choked. The Committee has unanimously resolved that there are enough bananas in the whole Empire to feed those who need bananas and if there aren't they could be easily grown and supplied and if there are more bananas than eaters, the consumers should be multiplied by effective propaganda. It was suggested that the Indian Agricultural Research Council should pay a special contribution to the Imperial Fund for furthering the Imperial object.

The Sub-Committee appointed to investigate the possibility and method of compiling figures has unanimously agreed that figures about anything could be compiled provided only they are available and the best method of compiling them for Imperial purposes is to write them down. Sir P. Ginwalla added a note that the stationery used in writing should, as far as possible, be made in the Empire. Great satisfaction is expressed at the report of the Committee.

The Committee on uniformity of Imperial goods recommended that industrialists and merchants within the Empire should be asked to make their goods uniform in appearance, if not in quality as far as possible. Sir George Rainy appended a note suggesting that if India cannot produce goods of requisite standard, it should be permitted to purchase them. This registers a marked advance in standardised production within the Commonwealth.

The Mule Sub-Committee, it is stated, was impressed by the military and strategic importance of mules especially on the frontiers of India and decided to draw the attention of the Conference to the drawing of the attention of the various authorities to this matter. The Sub-Committee unanimously invited the Conference to ask the various Dominions and particularly India to establish a research institution for computing figures about the existing number of, and the rate of mortality among, mules.

The Sub-Committee was sure that the labours of the Figures Committee would facilitate the task.

Sir Atul Chatterjee stated that there was a strong feeling in India, outside the Congress circles, that donkeys should be included in this investigation and hoped that the enquiry would not be obstructed by the special emergency powers in the N. W. F. Province.

The Imperial Circus Committee has decided to regard with favour the proposal of an Imperial Circus on the sole condition that it is feasible and has recommended the Conference to invite the opinions of the various governments on the subject. Meanwhile, the Committee suggested that funds for the purpose should

be provided by the Indian Princes and the balance should be raised in India from the people through the Viceroy's appeal or a loan. The Committee recorded, with thanks, the offer of several Indian Rajas, Maharajas and Hurrahajas to supply acrobats, monkeys, horses, donkeys, elephants, parrots, lions and dogs.—

(Reuter).

Ottawa, August 12.

The full Imperial Conference reassembled to-day after three weeks. Meanwhile, Mr. Thomas who toured Canada has become immensely popular and universally earned the nickname of Mr. Mother-Country.

The Conference examined the reports of the various Sub-Committees and went into them in considerable detail. Excellent spirit prevailed as there was no difference of opinion and the reports were unanimously accepted.

It speaks much for the thoroughness of the work of the Sub-Committees that they left no work for the Conference except that of agreeing to their recommendations.

Mr. Thomas, in bringing the Conference to a close, regretted that despite all their efforts to prolong it, the Conference was now definitely ending. "That it had been a momentous success, no one who had participated in it (and eaten the various dinners and luncheons) could possibly deny. The British Commonwealth of Nations is a bulkwark of peace and of freedom of trade since the only motive of those who

oppose it is enmity and of those who impose tariff barriers against it, competition.

"So long, therefore, as the British Empire continued, the peace of the world was assured except when there was war and no tariff restrictions will be imposed save in Imperial interests (*Cheers*).

Proceeding, Mr. Thomas paid a warm tribute to the work of the various Sub-Committees and specially alluded to the work of the Figures Committee which constituted a distinct advance in Imperial economic relationship as figures of everything could be compiled by everybody as soon as they were available.

Concluding, Mr. Thomas bade a touching farewell to the delegates and assured them that they would try to convene another Conference of this kind at the earliest available opportunity.—(*Reuter*).

Ottawa, August 13.

The *Times*, in a leading article, declares that the Conference was a symbol of the fraternal emotions and economic sentiments, which surge this vast conglomeration of diverse nations and constitutes a milestone on the highway to Imperial economic unity which had already been achieved.

Interviewed by *Reuter* (as arranged) Sir Atul Chatterjee pronounced the Conference an unqualified triumph. He was hopeful about the future and was returning to London for the purpose.

The other Indian Delegates expressed satisfaction not only at the achievements of the Conference whose value would be perceived only when they are forgotten but at the cordiality of reception they got everywhere.

They all agreed that important undoubtedly as were the results of the Conference, what was still more valuable was the spirit behind them all, particularly the spirits served at an All-Empire Dinner.—(Reuter).

9th July, 1932.

LOANACY : OR MOON-BEAMS ON THE NEW CONVERSION LOAN.

It was after a long time that I met the other day my old friend the Man-in-the-Street. He is seldom found in the street, as anyone who has tried to see him knows; but as he had been thrown on the street owing to the vigorous policy of retrenchment followed all-round, he was stamping the street—bare-headed and bare-footed. Yet his countenance was beaming and he was all smiles. I asked him why he was so happy.

"It's the new Conversion Loan," he replied with enthusiasm. "There is no doubt it's the beginning of the commencement of the first signs of an improvement in financial conditions. I feel to-day as though a burden had been lifted from over my shoulders because the interest charges on public debt have been reduced by the new Conversion. I feel that my credit stands higher to-day than it did 24 hours ago or even 12 hours ago, although my creditors give me no peace."

"But you see," proceeded the Man-in-the Street, "I am not merely an individual in search of employment but a citizen of India, a part of the nation, a member of the greatest Empire in the world over which the Sun never sets because, as the Irishman said, God never trusts Englishmen in the dark. Although, therefore, regarded as an individual, I have lost my job, my post in the Government Department

having been axed, as a member of the Commonwealth, I rejoice that my salary has been saved to the nation. What I have lost as a bread-winner, I have gained as a tax-payer provided, that is, I have any money left to pay taxes. Public money should not be squandered, as Lord Lloyd observed, probably at a dinner celebrating the launching of the Back Bay scheme. Individuals must sacrifice for the sake of the nation, as the Finance Member would, no doubt, explain when defending the 5 per cent. restoration of cuts in salaries. *Sacrifice* is the key-note.

"There is no doubt about this," the Man-in-the-Street continued : "Imperialism is built on the sacrifices of millions of subject-peoples. Capitalism is founded on the sacrifices of crores of wage-earners. Credit and stability of governments rest on the sacrifices and privations of lakhs of tax-payers. In order that the nation should economise, the people as individuals have to suffer. It is not sometimes quite clear to me as to who gains if everybody has to suffer but it appears as though the nation consists of all persons except those whose salaries and wages are being cut and who are thrown out of employment.

"However," he consoled himself : "that is the result of organising economic life on a vast and intricate scale. They resort to deflation and call it depression. They create unemployment and call it economy. They spread stomach-pinching and call it balancing the Budget. They starve individuals and call it national saving. Oh ! these Great Ones of the world !

"Yet, after all, we are spiritualising our finances. We now speak about the Conversion of loans and the

Redemption of debts, the Fall of the pound and the Revival of trade. For to money is the soul of the nation devoted. The religion of money is the one religion which is not only professed but also sincerely followed. Gentlemen prefer blondes but still bigger Gentlemen prefer Bonds."

And later, as I thought over what the Man-in-the-Street told me of the coming of the financial Dawn, I remembered a story of Mark Twain who, when staying at a Swiss hotel, got out of bed early and went out in his dressing-gown to see the sunrise over the mountains, only to find himself standing in a crowd of people in evening dress who were watching the sunset.

11th February, 1933.

ON WORLD CAUSES AND WORLD CONFERENCES.

Although there are hopes of the coming of the Dawn as a result of financial (and not spiritual) Conversion and commercial (and not religious) Revival, I now find that the prospects of the Dawn still depend upon only two more conferences—the Anglo-American war-debt negotiations in Washington and the World Economic Conference to be held sometime in summer. After the war, when numerous Conferences were held at Genoa, Cannes, Paris and elsewhere to get out of the mess in which the statesmen had entangled themselves at Versailles, *Punch* suggested that visits should be paid to the Conference-fields instead of the battle-fields. Of late, we have had a series of Disarmament Conferences at Geneva, the Lausanne Conference on reparations and war-debts, the Ottawa Conference with its band of disinterested super-businessmen, not to mention the highly successful R.T.C. which has no R.T.C. (Reference To Context) at the moment. At these Conferences, the Delegates have waded through ink rather than blood and the floors have been strewn with litter and blotting paper instead of dead bodies and wounded soldiers.

But now all hopes are centred in the World Economic Conference for solving the few questions which still remain namely, financial questions such as monetary and credit policy, exchange difficulties, price

stabilisation, etc., and economic questions such as tariffs, quotas and other barriers to trade and peculiar post-war problems such as inter-allied debts and reparations. Preparations for the Preparatory Committee are nearly over. The success of the Conference is assured by the fact that America desires the exclusion of questions like inter-allied debts, reparations and tariff rates from the agenda of the Conference. If therefore the Conference reaches an agreement on the questions on which either agreement has been reached by now or no agreement is necessary, only one or two or at most three Conferences will be required to discuss and settle the remaining questions which relate to financial, economic and commercial issues. But if in the meanwhile by some stroke of luck or Providential blessing (provided Providence survives the depression) the economic blizzard has passed, the prospects of the World Economic Conference will be very bright, indeed. For the Conference will then be benefitted by the Trade Revival which depends upon the outcome of the Conference.

* * * *

The following illuminating conversation took place recently between a Humble Layman and an eminent Economic Authority :—

Humble Layman : Why, Sir, does the Railway Budget show such a heavy deficit?

Economic Authority : Owing to World Causes.

H. L. : Why, pray, cannot Provincial Budgets be balanced?

E. A. : Owing to World Causes.

H. L. : Why are social services being starved in India?

E. A.: Owing to World Causes.

H. L. (*trembling*): But then why cannot military expenditure be reduced somewhat?

E. A. (*majestically*): Also owing to World Causes—of another kind.

H. L.: Why is a temporary surcharge on income-tax threatening to be a permanent feature?

E. A.: Owing to World Causes.

H. L. (*with diffidence*): How is then a restoration of 5 per cent. cut in the salaries of Government servants possible?

E. A. (*firmly*): Because salaries of Civil Servants and public servants in India are entirely independent of World Causes.

H. L.: Why are port charges in certain major ports of India being continually raised?

E. A.: Owing to Word Causes.

H. L.: Why is the building of the New Howrah Bridge being delayed?

E. A.: Owing to World Causes.

H. L.: Why is there such terrible unemployment among the middle-classes and why are labourers being thrown on the street?

E. A.: Owing to World Causes.

H. L.: Why are the Indian cultivators suffering enormous privations, families literally starving and persons committing suicide through desperation?

E. A.: Owing to World Causes.

H. L.: Why cannot a Reserve Bank be established at an early date?

E. A.: Owing to World Causes.

H. L. : Then why has there been such a heavy export of gold from India since September, 1931?

E. A. : Owing to World Causes, of course.

H. L. (*with ignorant impatience*) : But what, on earth, do World Causes mean?

E. A. (*with academic confidence*) : That's a little difficult to explain because economic authorities and experts are not yet agreed as to what are these World Causes nor have they been able to find them out. These World Causes are as ambiguous as "World Opinion" and as elastic as "World Conscience."

H. L. : But then how can these World Causes be removed?

E. A. : By adopting World Remedies.

H. L. : And—what are they?

E. A. : That, you see, depends on what are ultimately found to be the real World Causes.

H. L. : What will the coming World Economic Conference do?

E. A. : It will try to find out if there is any agreement as to what are World Causes and if so whether there is any agreement regarding the Causes of the present World Causes. These Causes will be ultimately traced to their original Causes or even Cause. The Conference might eventually disperse after singing "Lead Kindly Light."

18th February, 1933.

GOLD STANDARD—TO BE OR NOT TO BE

A PEEP INTO HIGH SECRETS.

It is now quite clear from the views of Economic Experts, Financial Authorities and Businessmen that America has either gone off the Gold Standard or has not gone off it.

But what is not generally known is that certain very important, urgent and confidential cables have been exchanged on the subject between Sir George Schuster on the one hand and President Roosevelt on the other hand. (Hands across the Seas).

*From Sir George Schuster to President Roosevelt on
6-3-1933.*

Congratulations on coming off Gold Standard. Did you fall off it or were you pushed off it? I saw its necessity if not inevitability since September, 1931 when England went off it. Mentioned it to Aravamudhu Aiyengar who has now apparently forgotten all about it. No one has a good word to say about gold—neither saints, philosophers, poets, essayists nor economists. Come off it entirely and quickly as from a burning roof.

*From President Roosevelt to Sir George Schuster on
6-3-1933.*

Grateful for felicitations. Have gone off G. S. (Gold Standard, not George Schuster) completely. Have also placed embargo on exports of gold and silver. Trust you see its necessity if not inevitability.

*From Sir George Schuster to President Roosevelt on
7-3-1933.*

Glad. Strongly urge with usual diplomatic humility and recognition sovereign rights of America and no desire interfere internal affairs, you should egg the Congress to peg the dollar to sterling. Sterling is the most stable and respectable currency of the Ottawa Family and unless you peg the dollar, it will sag. Please explain reasons for embargo.

*From President Roosevelt to Sir George Schuster on
7-3-1933.*

Thanks for suggestion. Your proposal of pegging seems rather like nagging. I would sooner have the dollar lagging than have the almighty coin tagging to the British pound whose sterling worth I have known. Embargo placed to stop possible drain of gold.

*From Sir George Schuster to President Roosevelt on
8-3-1933.*

Regret can't approve embargo on gold on sound principles of finance (that is, my policy). Such embargo in our view constitutes "gross and unnecessary interference with liberty of private individuals" which we strongly abhor as such interference justifiable only in wider national interests such as Ordinances for suppressing the Congress. Embargo involves greater interference with individual liberty than Volstead Act which you are pledged to repeal. Moreover, as I have emphasised more than once (and even Sir Mahomed Yakub has heard me during intervals of his nap) gold

cannot be eaten or drunk while liquors and wines can be (drunk). See *Indian Finance* supplement on American Embargo which states "bullion dealers cannot eat it (gold)." Therefore, grounds for interference still weaker. Do you not remember the story of Midas? (See Ancient Myths and Legends or Carlyle or a good Book of Quotations). "Then gaudy gold, hard food for Midas!" Midas couldn't eat gold as I anticipated ten thousand years later. Midas longed for gold. He got gold. So whatever he touched became gold and he with his long ears was the little better for it. Why do you repeat Midas' mistake instead of following our monetary policy approved by a highly intelligent, patriotic, self-respecting and self-preserving Assembly? You are playing into the hands of the Federation which also advocated similar embargo for India.

*From President Roosevelt to Sir George Schuster on
8-3-1933.*

If gold can't be eaten neither can sterling. With all respect to your British commonsense why are you all so sentimental about sterling? Strongly object to your suppressing the Congress which is the pivot of the American Constitution, American Constitution lays down "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as its aim but cynics say that the only place where you can find Liberty in America is the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour. Don't quote Midas as Americans don't believe in ancient myths and legends but only in modern ones. Please advise which Federation you refer to. American Constitution federal since the days of

Washington, Hamilton and Maddison. Understand Indian Constitution also following Federal plan and approved by Sankey, Reading and Hoare.

*From Sir George Schuster to President Roosevelt on
8-3-1933.*

Regret reference to Congress not American Congress but an Indian Congress. Question relevant to repression and not depression. Misunderstanding due to same expression. Similar trouble about Federation which refers to a body of Indian Chambers of Commerce and not to your or Sankey-Sapru Federation. Regret can't agree with decision about embargo. Please remember that gold glitters most where virtue shines no more as stars from absent suns have leave to shine. Also that judges and senates (not the American, of course) have been bought for gold. To have gold is to be in fear and to want it is to be in sorrow. Please don't forget that poison is drunk out of golden cups. Pray therefore shun gold. Don't hoard it and withdraw the embargo. It will enable the American masses "to draw on reserves" instead of "living on capital" and it will provide means to them "to exchange one form of investment for another"; it will release gold hoards for productive purposes and strengthen the credit of America. Permit its export immediately. If I may quote a little poetry and request the Telegraph authorities to charge it at half-rates (though it will be a book adjustment) :

*"Put the foolish stuff on board
Let it travel where it will!"*

If you are not enamoured of sterling, what Standard will you be on? Chewing gum or Bootlegging or Pep or Ford Motorcar Standard? Please remember a Standard is kept in the vaults of the Treasury and the Banks; and rats and insects cannot eat metal any more than human beings. In fact, the Standard must be something that can't be eaten or drunk—that is its essential characteristic.

*From President Roosevelt to Sir George Schuster on
9-3-1933.*

Thanks, but your argument doesn't convince me. If worship of gold is idolatry, this idol wields, unlike temple-idols, some real power in the world we live in. Please don't cite classical quotations about gold. I can give hundreds of contrary quotations about the benefits and uses of gold but my Secretary can't trace just now my Dictionary of Quotations. Let me, however, remind you what a British poet Shelley said in a moment of righteous indignation about your fictitious currency and fiduciary notes :—

*"Tis to let the Ghost of Gold
Take from toil a thousandfold
More than ever his substance could
In the tyrannies of old :
"Paper coin—that forgery
Of the title-deeds, which ye
Hold something of the worth
Of the inheritance of Earth."*

Understand a substantial portion of gold exported from India is described as distress gold and *Indian Finance*

also believes in that view. How will you withstand the economic blizzard if the ultimate resources of the people are being dissipated? Am worried about unemployment which was one ground for going off Gold Standard. What are you doing about it?

*From Sir George Schuster to President Roosevelt on
9-3-1933.*

Constitutionally question of unemployment a matter for Provincial Governments and the concern of Ministers. Most Provinces appointed Committees which is the acme of administrative efficiency in India and are deeply studying the reports. The Government of India deal only with questions of currency and exchange which depend on world factors, tariffs which involve interference with individual liberty to trade and social and religious questions on which they remain neutral because of their trusteeship of the people. The Finance Member is popularly known as the Central Tax-Gatherer. We define a blizzard as "that condition of a country in which it suffers from a variety of world causes and in which it is possible to restore salary cuts of Government servants *before* reducing taxation." We are already passing this blizzard or typhoon or whatever you call it. I have publicly admired the way the masses have adjusted their stomachs to their food.

*From President Roosevelt to Sir George Schuster on
10-3-1933:*

My admiration for the manner in which you are admiring the sacrifices of Indian masses is unbounded.

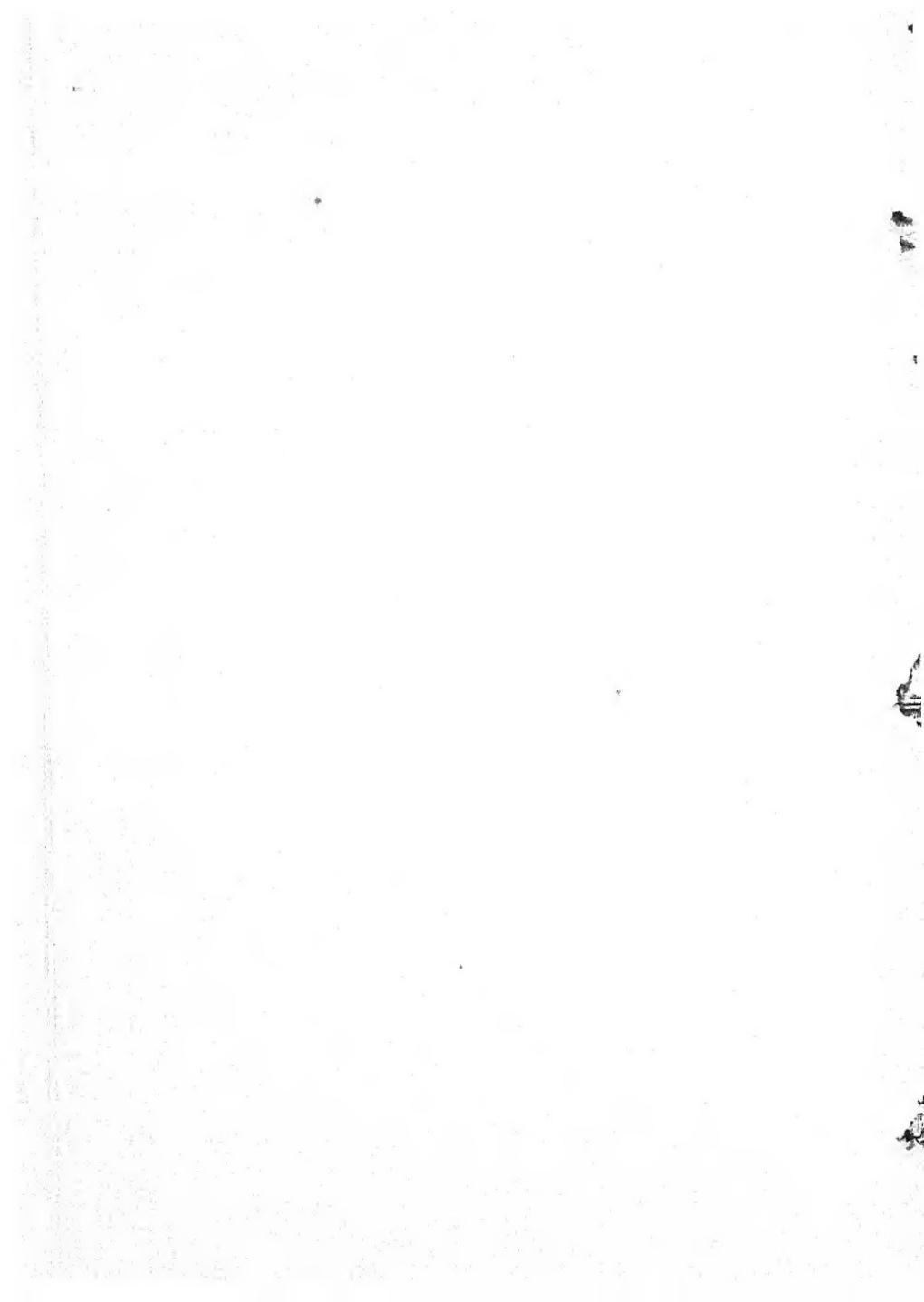
But I cannot withdraw the embargo whatever its effects on world-economy and even if the only thing which will eventually remain on the Gold Standard is Gold itself.

*From Sir George Schuster to President Roosevelt on
10-3-1933.*

O Roosevelt! Thou art become a World Cause Thyself!

11th March, 1933.

PART III
MATTERS MISCELLANEOUS



THOUGHTS ON THE CHINESE SITUATION

The greatest event in the international world is the struggle in China. The Chinese situation is worse than a cross-word puzzle and the Celestial Empire is, by no means, a terrestrial paradise at present. When talking to a friend the other day, I happened to mention that Chang-Tso-Lin was approaching Wu-Pei-Fu, he asked me whether Wu-Pei-Fu was the biggest river in China! Another friend laughed at his amazing ignorance of the subject, because, as he said, Wu-Pei-Fu is not the name of a river but of a town! The fact is that though we are all, of course, in favour of China, the names of the War-lords or Tuchuns (as they are called) get mixed up with the names of the rivers and towns in China. Though the Chinese may be making history, we must learn a little geography.

* * * *

There is some saying in English about a Bull in China shop. But the trouble to-day is of John Bull in China. What the red rag is to the bull, the Red of Moscow is to John Bull. John Bull has an aversion to red colour except for painting his territory with.

* * * *

Through all the confusions of the Chinese situation, only one thing is clear and that is that the Chinese have decided to continue to occupy China. But colour has an importance of its own in politics. It is believed

by experts on China that despite the allegiance of some of them to the Reds of Moscow, the Chinese will continue to preserve the yellow on their skins.

* * * *

Is it the jaundiced eye of the foreigner which sees the Yellow Peril in China and is it the anger (or shame) of the imperialist that turning red itself brooks not the Red of any other country? In China, the yellow has combined with the red. Which is the resulting pigment?

* * * *

The latest news from China is that the foreign troops and marines are busy with Ping-Pong and Mah-Jong and do not care much for Hong-Kong.

May, 1927.

NO MORE DAYS

Apropos of the Detenus' Day to demonstrate the deep indignation of the people against the policy of continuous and indefinite detention of young men without trial or reason, I have the utmost sympathy with these hapless victims of official lawlessness, but I trust I shall not be considered too fastidious if I suggest that we are having rather too many Days recently. We have only just had a Bardoli Day. Before that we had the Empire Day, an occasion when Imperial loyalty is sought to be inculcated in Indian children who are taught to love the Empire by painting the map red and waving the Union Jack and giving three cheers for the local Collector. Then there is the All Fools' Day on which the Mayoral election is held in Calcutta. Every year we have also the Armistice Day for militarists and the girl-shy people and the button-holing flappers. A couple of years ago we had a series of South Africa Days, a couple of Kenya Days and the Jallianwalla Day. There was also last year a proposal to observe the China Day to express our sympathy with China, and there was the Simon Commission Day early this year. Then there is the May Day and the still more interesting day for labour, namely, the Pay Day; the Passengers' Relief Day and the Co-operators' Day; the Day on which Shivajee is supposed to have been born (according to one view) and on which he was not born (according to another view); the Day on

which Shaukat Ali first wept for the miseries of the Musalmans in Turkey, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Morocco, Persia and a number of other places; the Day on which Mrs. Annie Besant and Pundit Malaviya first spun (and then probably gave it up); the Day on which no page of *Forward* contained the name of Mr. Subash Chundra Bose and the Day on which the Maharaja of Burdwan talked sense. Besides, there are innumerable Days commemorating the birth or death anniversaries of countless saints, public men, authors and donors. Let us have a "No More Days" campaign and fix a Day to observe it. There will be at least one spare Day in the year to observe *that*—I hope.

30th June, 1928.

"HONOURS" AND HONOUR.

"He (Mr. Gladstone) might hesitate to act upon the motives to which he has last adverted (that is, of refusing the Queen's offer of earldom) did he not feel rooted in the persuasion that the small good he may hope hereafter to effect can best be prosecuted without the change in his position."—

Gladstone's Letter to Queen Victoria

Some systems are so radically bad that the surest way to end them is to leave them alone. That is why I am rather pleased than otherwise at the periodical distribution of titles in this country. The value of our new aristocracy, like the price of commodities, varies in inverse ratio to the increase in its quantity. Titles have become so cheap and ridiculous that many distinguished persons feel a little awkward when some "honour" is thrust upon them. For some are born with "honours," some achieve "honours" and others have "honours" thrust upon them. Those who are really independent rarely find themselves in this unenviable position, since their services are rewarded not by the gift of titles but by the grant of a term of imprisonment—simple or rigorous. This phenomenon is not peculiar to our country or our age. Men like to be called by names which put them on a higher level than their fellow-creatures and the world honours the parasite as it casts

the prophet and the pioneer into prison. What is peculiar in our country is the exploitation of this weakness of human nature for the perpetuation of a political system. When a title is bestowed on a person, the man-in-the-street winks : for he feels that the titled gentleman is on the slippery path. On the other hand, men who are known to have refused titles or who have never been offered one, are respected. And who can say that the intuition of the man-in-the-street is false ?

Since the advent of the non-co-operation movement in 1920, the acquisition of titles has become a positive disqualification in the public eye. This is not merely the consequence of an altered conception of citizenship which Gandhism has brought about : it is also the result of the swollen "Honours Lists" and the invention of fancy titles since the War. To those who are sceptical of the benefits derived by India from her Imperial (or Commonwealthian?) status, I would point out that her citizens have the rare privilege of having all sorts of combination of letters of the alphabet like C. B. E., O. B. E., and M. B. E. affixed to their names. The sceptic might retort that titles are in disrepute among the self-governing Dominions, some of whose governments have asked the British Government not to confer titles on their nationals except when requested by the authorities of the Dominions—a request, by the way, which they would never make—and that, therefore, here as elsewhere, India is not on a level with the Dominions. But it would be a mistake to argue thus. Such excess of generosity towards India is well-meant. In this respect, India has achieved something more than

Dominion status : it is well on the way to complete independence—in catering for titles. My only prayer to the benign Government is to make all those who are not non-co-operators (including myself) knights. It is felt (or at least I feel) that the time has come for the Government to take swift and decisive action and bestow titles all round. The choice of a worthy person (that is, my choice) has, as in so many other cases, fallen reluctantly upon myself. The same is true of several others. For are they not all, in a famous phrase, honourable men? The late King Edward speaking of some disease remarked “if curable—why not cured?” I say—if honourable, why not honoured? Such a process would enhance the importance of a plain mister, if you are an English-speaking nationalist, or a “srijut” (abbreviated as sjt); since where everybody is somebody, nobody is anybody. In fine, the best cure for the absurd system of honours is to universalise the honours wholesale and have done with it.

It is said that even the people have their own system of honours. They bestow the titles of Mahatma and Deshbandhu, of Dinbandhu and Sardar. They add the suffix of “Ji” to names of leaders and even to terms like “Pandit.” True. But no sane man objects if the people, through spontaneous affection and respect, call a man a Mahatma or Deshbandhu or Panditji. The recognition of such titles is not compulsory. Even if you speak of Gandhiji as Mr. Gandhi, that does not detract one whit from his essential merits. But how many gallant knights would be the poorer for the loss of their necessary prefixes! Nor do Mahatmas and Deshbandhus go about hankering after titles—to whom

would they go?—while I am not sure how many of the “honoured” gentlemen receive their titles as surprise gifts. With all its limitations, a genuine appellation freely bestowed by the popular will is preferable to the highest distinction that could be conferred by a foreign bureaucracy. Honour is better than “Honours.” The standards of one might need to be mended at times, but the system of the other should only be ended.

It is true that honours are at times conferred on men of real worth, but this makes the system worse, not better. For it gives to the title a prestige which the title otherwise lacks and which it does not deserve. In making it seem that you honour the man, you really honour the title. How many of the knights deserve the title in the same sense as Sir C. V. Raman does? The system of “honours” may, on occasions, become less obnoxious by “honouring” a right man, but its inherent wrong is not thereby diminished. Ancient despotisms hanged and shot their opponents; modern bureaucracies invite them to dinners and levees and finally damn them with some “Honour,” which not seldom robs them of public respect. That is why Gladstone preferred to be a Great Commoner and that is why most of the greatest men—whether in England or in India—are those who are plain men. The title is an anti-democratic device, which is the product of the class-struggle in England and has been imported into India alongwith Lancashire cloth. Indian nationalism is right in distrusting it politically, but it will die only when we laugh it out as childish. As in a well-known *Punch* cartoon, we need to picture a would-be Knight,

addressing Dame Bureaucracy in hushed tones of affection and frankness :

I would not love thee, dear so much,
Loved I not *honours* more !

13th June, 1931.

A SINGULAR OUTBURST OF PLURALS

RESULTS OF A DUAL POLICY?

It is not sufficiently well-known that one of the disastrous consequences of the "dual" policy (repression-cum-reform) enunciated by Sir Samuel Hoare and adopted by Lord Willingdon, has been the rapid decline in singulars in this country and in this province.

As even Professors of English are aware, the dual is not current in the English language any more than is the duel in England so that the only alternative to fall back upon is the plural in one case and the law-court in the other. Consequently, there is a plethora of plurals all round. The daily press is literally flooded with plurals of all sorts and few words are spared.

Some of my friends refuse to admit, since the breach of the Gandhi-Irwin truce and the abandonment of the singular policy involved in it, that there is any singular noun in the English language : others decline to acknowledge that there can be any verb except the plural. The use of 'we' in place of the first person singular is not now confined only to editors. An ex-Congressman, who is disinclined to join the Congress movement explained that "*they* have asked me not to join just now"—the 'they' being only an enlargement of the first person singular into the third person plural.

In brief, the singular form is getting into disuse owing to the present dual or non-singular policy of the Government.

For, the fact is that plurals are sweeping the land like a tornado. The press has been infected as though there was an epidemic. When, for instance, Mr. B. C. Pal died, we read the headline "Mr. B. C. Chatterjee's Tributes" to Pal and also praise of Pal's "characteristic languages." Or turn to Bombay riots. We were informed that "all sorts of medical helps" were rendered and although "conditions are returning to normal ones" and "wreckages and garbages have been cleared," much "damages have been done." Local committees were, however, doing good relief "works."

As regards the treatment of political prisoners, it is rather disconcerting to learn that the "foods" provided to them are not always of satisfactory "qualities," while "circumstantial evidences" go to show that the "conducts" of the warders leave much to be desired.

There are many disclosures, which we are informed, the "nationalist presses" cannot make at present. It is necessary, therefore, as we are told by another paper, not to condemn such repressive "legislations" but also to prevent revolutionary "literatures" from spreading.

To turn to Swadeshi, it is satisfactory to note that a leading article of a leading paper states that the "productions of finer cloth" by Indian cotton mills have increased, while more up-to-date "machineries" are being installed by some of them.

As regards the sugar industry, what is wanted, I understand, is increase in "the yields of date palms."

If we look at the world outside, things are no better. The Irish Conference, I gather, although

abortive was conducted in "the best of humours" while "criticisms" are made of "Hoover's intentions to support prohibition."

But the infection is so serious that we read even of such phrases as "at a meeting of the Bengal Chambers of Commerce" or "a good deal of grounds for optimism exist about Ottawa" while "a Hindu women" was molested in the Central Avenue.

How widespread is the malady will be evident from the following typical conversation one overhears now-a-days between persons who are careful readers of leaders of newspapers and faithful followers of leaders of the public :

(*Note* : Most of the words are taken from the daily press and a few from conversation. They are not imaginary.)

Mr. A.—Hullo!

Mr. B.—Well ! Where are you going ?

Mr. A.—I am going to buy some new furnitures. But you seem to be in a hurry !

Mr. B.—Yes ! Yes ! I have to go early to office as I have many hard works to-day.

Mr. A.—Even in these days of depressions ?

Mr. B.—Yes. The fact is that we have made many retrenchments in our office.

Mr. A.—But with due respects, may I ask whether actions have been taken upon these proposals ?

Mr. B.—Certainly. Our local "boss" had given his words to the Directors that expenditures will be reduced and he has to take decisions and submit explanations. But I can spare some

times. Do you want to have any discussions with me on any matters?

Mr. A.—No, not particularly. I only wanted to know what are your opinions on the question of imperial preferences and the jute crisis.

Mr. B.—I have not much informations about preferences. Although I do not approve of Government interferences as a rule, I am in favour of introductions of short-time agreements through Government actions. I have come to these conclusions after careful considerations and mature deliberations and have no misapprehensions on the subjects.

Mr. A.—But what about the oppressions from which the poor cultivators are suffering?

Mr. B.—There could be many improvements in their conditions, of course, if social reforms are encouraged. But, after all, the whole country at present has to put up with various troubles and severe repressions.

Mr. A.—But don't you want to make protests against imperial preferences?

Mr. B.—We do not believe in futile protests.

Mr. A.—Who are of these views apart from yourself?

Mr. B.—Well, for the present, only myself.

Mr. A.—But don't you think that the examinations of this question will lead to many benefits?

Mr. B.—Certainly, it will impart instructions to the masses.

Mr. A.—But I must now go. I have to catch a train and have still to pack up my luggages.

These are the fruits of a dual policy. In vain have I argued with these gentlemen that this policy is not really a dual one but a singular one—singular alike in its conception and execution, singular also in its aim and its effects. But to no purpose. They will not listen and the epidemic is raging.

As editors of newspapers write while half-asleep at night, will Sir Samuel Hoare even now wake up—not only from his bed but also from his chair? If this evil is left unchecked, we (that is, I) do not know where and how matters will end. Already dissatisfaction with mere plurals is growing. I have heard people having “differences of opinionses” on questions and being scorched by the “rayses” of the sun. These may be “newses” to some but they are true.

Before there is a demand for an Ordinance on behalf of linguists to suppress the illegal plural and ensure the freedom of the singular for the “purifications” of “languages” and solve another crisis, we demand that the “policies” of the Government be completely reversed.

[When we first perused G. L. M.’s article, we were inclined to attribute this formidable list of plurals in some degree at any rate to the flight of his imagination (or, as he would put it, figments of his imaginations). What a shock it was, therefore, for us and an unexpected proof of the truth of his analysis when a gentleman remarked to us just as we are going to the press that he was feeling lonely and needed “some companies!” As Managing Agents would, at present, be only too glad to get rid of “companies,” he could have had them for the asking. But this stray

remark convinced us that the disease diagnosed by G. L. M. is deep-seated and widespread.

G. L. M., on being told this, is understood to have observed that though European languages are not our mother-tongues, to have doubted his veracity was to add insults to injuries. *Editor—Indian Finance.]*

25th June, 1932.

A WEEK OF SELF-DENIAL

The worst of these days is that no surprises are in store for us. We know everything and can anticipate almost all important happenings—at least so it seems after they happen. We are simply tired by the monotony of contemporary events and bored by the daily newspaper. Neither a devastating flood in China nor a revolution in Spain nor a war in South America nor even the pompous speeches of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald move us. Our senses have been blunted and dulled by repetition.

But suppose that some magician's wand (to quote Sir P. C. Ray's allusion to boycott of cigarettes in Bengal) transformed the whole scene. What would happen? You never can tell. The unexpected would astonish even the sophisticated and sensation-fed citizen of to-day; even the unthinkable would be thunk. Here is a sample of such a week.

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Monday.

His Excellency the Viceroy, in his address to the Assembly, admitted that the Ordinances had failed to crush the Congress movement and acknowledged that, without the participation of the most politically active organisation in India, no satisfactory constitution could be devised, much less function.

Mr. Villiers, who is in London, collapsed on hearing this news and has been admitted into a nursing home for nervous breakdown.

* * * *

Tuesday.

Mr. Jayakar has refused to associate himself with a statement issued by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru on the ground that Sir Tej Bahadur does not represent anyone, not even himself (Mr. Jayakar). Sir Tej Bahadur has proceeded to Russia for a change.

Mr. L. R. Tairsee did *not* try to crack a joke in the Bombay Corporation to-day. Many members walked out of the meeting in tears.

* * * *

Wednesday.

The *Statesman*, in a leading article, condemns undue interference with local self-governing bodies and pays a warm tribute to the work of the Calcutta Corporation in regard to education, sanitation and schemes of gas and electricity.

At the Quarterly Meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber of Bombay, Mr. Manu Subedar praised Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas and expressed complete confidence in the present executive of the Federation of Indian Chambers. Many members, including Sir Purshottamdas, fainted and had to be carried out in an unconscious condition.

* * * *

Thursday.

At to-day's meeting of the Calcutta Corporation, Mr. Sachindranath Mukherjee expressed his inability

to move a motion of condolence for a municipal horse which died in harness. The Mayor thereupon offered to resign. Fortunately, Mr. C. C. Biswas moved an adjournment in honour of two Congress volunteers who had been caned in the Corporation Street.

In front of the Central Bank of India's premises in Bombay, Mr. Shamdasani publicly embraced Mr. Pochkhanawala and declared later, in a statement to the press, that the balance-sheets of the Bank were perfectly in order.

* * * *

Friday.

Liberty and *Advance* deprecate the existence of two nationalist parties and two papers in Calcutta. They offer to amalgamate with each other provided their respective liabilities are taken up by the other. *Liberty* concludes its leading article with the inspiring words "Advance Liberty!" while *Advance* entitles its article with the heading "Will Liberty Advance?"

The Bombay Millowners' Association considers the new protective duties on cotton textiles adequate and effective.

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Saturday.

Sir Samuel Hoare, in a speech in the House of Commons, said that he had just finished reading the Premier's *Awakening of India* and *Government of India* and realised that the present policy was short-sighted and disastrous. He publicly apologised for calling nationalist Indians dogs by implication and acknowledged that policemen in India were not angels; that

Indian prisons were not paradise on earth; and that even Indian Congressmen were human beings. Mr. Winston Churchill rushed to throw the mace of the House at the S. O. S. but was prevented.

Indian Finance, in its to-day's issue, acknowledges that its forecast of the New Loan was rather wide of the mark and that its prognostications have been falsified by events. G. L. M. contributes a serious article on "How to Raise Price-Levels" on reading which Sir George Schuster gets a mild attack of apoplexy.

* * * *

Sunday.

Maulana Shaukat Ali, on his return from Afghanistan, proclaims himself a convert to the project of joint electorates without reservation of seats. He says that separate electorates are a snare and a delusion and, in order to prove his love of the Hindu community, he is prepared to take a Hindu bride, if necessary.

Dr. Moonje, in a statement in London, recognises the strong feelings of his Muslim brethren and sisters about separate electorates and observes that for the sake of national unity, and to allay Muslim fears, he is willing to agree to separate electorates as a temporary measure of expediency.

Mr. Baldwin said at Ottawa that the Conference was a complete failure. Mr. Bennett denounced Mr. Baldwin and the British Delegation in scathing terms and Sir Atul Chatterjee said that before they had reciprocity in exchange of goods, let there be reciprocity

in exchange of men and let Indians be admitted in the Dominions as equal citizens.

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If people could pass some such self-denying ordinance even in these days of Government by Ordinances, life would, perhaps, be again worth living.

13th August, 1932.

TEST PAPERS ON LAW AND ORDER

Some time ago, a circular was issued to schools all over Bengal asking the authorities to arrange for a weekly lecture on law and order. The object was to infuse loyalty into the minds of the school children so that before their vacant minds are filled up with seditious propaganda, they would be full of better stuff.

The idea is excellent. It is clear that the minds of the school children should not be poisoned with politics. It is also obvious what *politics* means in this country. To salute the Union Jack, to observe the Empire Day, to give three cheers to the local Collector is not *politics* at all. Because these are unrelated to a political movement. But to wave the National Flag, to observe the national days and to flock to revere national leaders is definitely to mix up education with *politics*. These are not a part of the established political system. Such things should be prohibited if the *right* kind of political notions are to be pumped into the receptive and unresisting minds of children.

I do not know how these precepts in law and order are proceeding and what is the progress, intensively and extensively, in the "loyalty" of the students towards the authorities from Sir Samuel Hoare to the local Sepoy. But I submit that the time has come to examine the results of the experiment and to test the "loyalty" of the students, their dislike and hatred of political leaders and movements and ideas and their

stock of unadulterated general information and knowledge gathered from unimpeachable sources (that is, sources which cannot be prosecuted under the Ordinance Laws). Here are samples of such examination papers which I present for the use of educational authorities without any fee or charge.

Below is the first instalment containing a few papers. The other sections will follow next week. Educational authorities must place orders for copies of the forthcoming issue from now.

PAPER I.—GENERAL INFORMATION
(INCLUDING GEOGRAPHY).

1. State the feminine genders of :—
 - (i) The Viceroy.
 - (ii) The Governor (*Be Tactful*).
 - (iii) The Collector.
 - (iv) The Magistrate.
 - (v) The Man-in-the-Street. (*Be Careful*).
2. Draw a map of your Province showing :
 - (a) the number of police thanas.
 - (b) the places where the largest number of dacoities has occurred.
 - (c) the places where punitive police are posted.
 - (d) the places where punitive taxes have been imposed.
 - (e) the places which are “declared areas.”

Or

Sketch a plan of the United Provinces showing the tours of Sir Malcolm Hailey and marking with big red

dots the places where he delivered the strongest speeches against the Congress.

(Don't attempt to answer both the questions at the same time).

3. (i) Is Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer

(a) An official?

(b) A non-official?

(c) An Indian State servant?

or (d) A British India public man?

(ii) What was he on

(a) 30th September, 1932?

(b) 1st April, 1933?

(iii) What would he be and where would he be on the 21st October next? Can you guess? If so, what else can you *not* guess?

PAPER II—ECONOMICS.

i. Blame briefly the Congress for the following.—

(a) Fall in General Prices.

(b) Failure of Crops.

Or

Overproduction of Commodities.

(c) Decrease in Railway Passenger Traffic.

(d) Increase of Railway Accidents.

(e) Increase of Abduction Cases.

(Use strong adjectives).

2. Show that World Depression is so called because it is due to all possible factors in the world except the Government of India's monetary, financial and fiscal policies.

3. Can the spinning wheel be described as a revolutionary instrument because it revolves? (*Argue in a circle*).

4. Define "Freedom of Trade" in the light of the Indian summer sun and prove clearly (to your own satisfaction at least) that the conception prohibits Swadeshi which is not "honest" as defined by the Secretary of State and the Bombay Government.

5. Can India's Currency system be described as one based on Bi-metallism because our Government are prepared to part with both her gold as well as her silver?

6. Sir George Schuster has assured the public that gold cannot be eaten. Can silver be eaten? If not, can paper be eaten except by children? Can you eat sterling securities?

(*Practical experiment should be made and result recorded.*)

7. Show by round figures and horizontal or vertical tables that financial stringency of the Bengal Government is due to

(a) excessive expenditure on preservation of law and order owing to the contentment of the masses.

(b) payment of extravagant allowances to the detenus.

How would you cut them (*i.e.* the expenditure and the allowances, not the masses and the detenus)?

8. Refrain from commenting upon

(a) Sterling loan sequel.

(b) Silver deal to meet British war debts to America.

9. How distressed you would be if it was suggested that the gold exported from India was "distress" gold?

(ii)

[Below is the second instalment of the paper which, it is suggested, should be set to students to test their sense of loyalty to the bureaucracy, their distrust of political leaders and their respect for "law and order" as interpreted from time to time by special and emergency laws, by ancient Regulations as well as new Ordinances, by traditions no less than innovations.

It is asked whether special marks would be assigned for hand-writing. Undoubtedly. But the proportion will be less in the case of candidates of the minority communities. As the exact percentage has been referred to the Prime Minister for being settled in accordance with the principle (if any) of his Communal Award, it will be declared later. But if candidates are to be eligible for a special certificate, their writing should be at least legible. Illegible writing will render them ineligible. Gandhiji has remarked that bad handwriting is a form of violence. Judged by this test, many of us are terrorists and liable to be held up under one legislation or another for dealing with revolutionaries. To avoid such trouble, the editorial staff of *Indian Finance* dictate and have for some time at least the consolation of being dictators—almost on a par with Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Kemal Pasha and the Provincial and District Congress Dictators. But

this is by the way. A hand-writing expert will be employed where papers seem not only illegible but illegitimately alike.

The time assigned for the answers is not fixed. It will vary according to the age, educational standard, sex, community, sub-caste and district of the candidate. Time, said Einstein, is relative. So are merits—in India. The Hindus believe in eternity and nothing less. They live up to Oscar Wilde's maxim that punctuality is the thief of time. The Hindus ask the "untouchables" to be re-born in order to have their sins fully expiated and to get the privilege of being touched. In this birth, they only touch the money of the untouchables. But there is no hurry. The deluge is still far-off. Time therefore should be no consideration in these replies. Defenders of "law and order" will not surely offend Hindu susceptibilities about time.

The examiner's decision will be final and the editor's decision will be fatal.]

PAPER III.—POLITICS.

I. (a) State the number, dates, months and years of the three successive Round Table Conferences held in 1930, 1931 and 1932 including their auxiliary, subsidiary and supplementary Committees? Explain in round terms their advantages, results, implications, complications, repercussions, etc.

(b) Deplore the difficulty in remembering their names but mention in excessive detail how many of these Committees were standing, how many sitting, how many touring as also which were consecutive and which simultaneous?

(c) Would the question to Old Kasper "what good came of it at last" be pertinent in this connection even if it sounds slightly impertinent?

2. How would you confuse—

- (a) agitation with sedition?
- (b) nationalists with anarchists?
- (c) a political movement with rebellion?

3. Is the Congress in a minority or a majority or either or neither?

(Answer vaguely but firmly with some reference to a few facts.)

4. How would you dispose of :—

- (a) A Picketter?
- (b) A Solicitor (*i.e.* one who solicits)?
- (c) A Hunger Striker?
- (d) A Striker for More Food (*e.g.* a Labour Striker)?

(Use of compass and other instruments is allowed.)

5. Stigmatise strongly

- (i) Anti-untouchability movement.
- (ii) Khadi.
- (iii) Anything which Mr. Gandhi does.

(Dwell on their hidden political motives and ruminante fearlessly on his subtle stupidity and astute short-sightedness.)

6. If it came to it, would you prefer (a) heavy sentence and light *lathi* charge or (b) light sentence and heavy *lathi* charge? Which do you consider will intensify your loyal instincts and deepen your love for law and order?

(State your reasons at enormous breadth.)

PAPER IV—ART (INCLUDING COLOUR-SENSE).

1. Is the *White* Paper so-called because it was issued from *White Hall*? Are both of them so named because they uphold the *White Man's Burden*?
2. Would you call the Empire Day or the May Day a Red-Letter Day? If both are red, why? And how will you distinguish between the red colour of the Empire and of the Bolsheviks?

(Reply with red pencil or red ink.)

3. Can the Meerut trial be called drawing “a red herring across the path”?

(Avoid contempt of court in reply.)

4. Congress leaders have no redeeming features. Illustrate.

PAPER V—SCIENCE: ASTRONOMY.

1. Is Mars a Red Planet? Will you have commercial relations with it?
2. If the sun never sets on the British Empire, how do its statesmen come under the influence of the moon so often?
3. Would you describe Mr. Jayakar as a star or a satellite in the firmament of Indian politics?
4. Is Dewan Chamanlal a meteor or a comet?

PAPER VI—SCIENCE: MEDICINE.

1. Explain the medical significance of the following with clinical references and dietetic preferences:—

(a) *angle of vision*: at what angle does the vision of British Democracy become right?

(b) *change of heart*: Would the shape of the heart of a bureaucrat remain the same even after it has changed through people's voluntary suffering?

(c) *lobar pneumonia*: how is it preferable to simple phthisis in home internment?

(d) *hydrophobia*: if barking dogs are set free and let loose and bite the members of the continuous caravan, what treatment would you prescribe?

2. Are you prepared to over-eat yourself for preventing the passage of the Temple Entry Bills? If so, how often and how long? What would you like to over-eat?

PAPER VII—PSYCHOLOGY.

1. How depressed would you be if you were told that Mr. Gandhi's efforts for the depressed classes are hopeful of results?

(Be Bright).

2. Who are the most depressed—The untouchables, Congressmen or Indian businessmen?

3. Examine the state of mind of :—

(i) Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru immediately after reading the White Paper.

(ii) Sir Charles Innes after the announcement of the results of the last general elections of the Burma Legislative Council.

(iii) Mr. Srinivasa Sastri soon after the announcement of the personnel of the third R. T. C. and the first (and, let us hope, the last) J. P. C.

(iv) The Simla Official on receipt of news of Mr. Gandhi's survival from the fast.

PAPER VIII—ESSAY.

“Sins of the children are visited on the parents.” Write a short essay on this theme with special reference to the punishment of parents for the political offences of their minor children.

or

“You are presumed to be guilty unless you can prove your innocence at the nearest police *thana*.” Illustrate this legal maxim with particular reference to Ordinances, parole orders and Chittagong index cards.

8th July, 1933.

FLOWERS OF SPEECH

GARNERED AND MADE UP-TO-DATE.

Analogies, says the logician, are weak as an argument. Comparisons, says the rhetorician while comparing, are odious. Yet the human mind is so constituted that it grasps comparisons more quickly than elaborate reasoning. Several distinguished speakers and writers therefore hit the nail on the head by apt and pithy comparisons, although others succeed thereby only in hitting their heads on the nail. Indeed, the temptation is so irresistible that when imagination fails and you cannot hit upon an apt comparison, you fall back on "anything." Literally is this true. Who has not heard people saying, "It was as frightful as anything" or "as beautiful as anything?" Now, nobody knows what this "anything" is; it is, in fact, everything. A thing can be both white and dark, good and bad, sweet and sour as "anything." When a person has to fall back upon this "anything," you can be pretty sure that his imagination is as bankrupt as anything or as that of British statesmanship.

If you can have artificial fruits (*e.g.*, tinned ones) preferred to fresh ones wherever "civilisation" spreads and also artificial flowers (*e.g.* of paper) which are to be seen and not smelt, to be admired but not to be touched, why can't we improve and modernise our flowers of speech? We are all in favour of scrapping old machines—even at the trifling cost of throwing a

few thousands on the street; we all want to modernise everything, provided, of course, we are personally benefited in this process of modernisation. Who does not want to be in the vanguard of progress so long as we progress to personal benefit and profit? Why can't we therefore rationalise our literature and make our comparisons quite up-to-date?

The old comparisons may or may not be odious; many of them are certainly obsolete. When we were at school and filled the blank "as dead as—" by Queen Anne, we knew precisely why Queen Anne was the most dead queen of England, although Einstein had not discovered his principle of relativity nor applied it to Death. But as an alternative, if we said "as dead as a church mouse," who could grasp its significance when only a few cranks, rich sinners and old women of both sexes go to church now-a-days? This, altogether apart from the fact that the Muslim organisations and the Hindu Mahasabha would object to such a comparison as surreptitious inculcation of Christianity, violation of religious neutrality of the Government, breach of the Queen's proclamation, etc. Literature, in such a contingency, might be reserved as a "special responsibility" for the Governor-General and Governors for the protection of minorities. Everything can be turned into a safeguard; nothing can prevent the progressive realisation of special responsibilities.

It is, therefore, not only essential but imperative that a new harvest of flowers should be garnered or, if you will, a fresh garland of such flowers woven, as the old flowers are stale and withered. The task, in fact, is *as urgent as catching the Imperial Mail when you*

are going Home on furlough. Here is a humble beginning, a list which is illustrative, but not exhaustive :

- As frankly rude as Sir Samuel Hoare.
- As hypocritical as Ramsay MacDonald.
- As offensively honest as Winston Churchill.
- As persistent as Lord Willingdon's refusal of interview to Gandhiji.
- As twinly as Sapru-Jayakar.
- As accommodating as an Indian Minister in the Montagu Constitution.
- As mysterious as operations on the N. W. Frontier.
- As vague as Government's explanatory communique.
- As inscrutable as the ways of our Bureaucracy.
- As uncertain as Gandhiji's next step.
- As optimistic as Pandit Malaviya's appeal for funds.
- As helpless as the Finance Member in the face of world conditions.
- As self-complacent as a Budget speech.
- As irrational as the classification of political prisoners.
- As popular as a dead leader.
- As regular as anniversary celebrations—in Bengal.
- As frequent as the divorces of a film actress.
- As noisy as a so-called silent demonstration.
- As disturbing as a neighbour's loud-speaker.
- As irritating as a taxi-horn at night.
- As sudden as a failure of electric current.
- As omni-competent in pretensions as an I.C.S.

As disastrous as the Indian Exchange policy.
As abortive as an International Conference.
As fruitless as a Commission or Committee's Report.
As accurate (or inaccurate?) as an *Indian Finance* forecast.
As indecisive as an Indian Liberal.
As prolific as an Indian politician's statements.
As politically inconsistent as Sir Hari Singh Gour.
As irresponsible as an absentee M.L.A. (or M.L.C.).
As spineless as a title-hunter.
As boring as a Government House garden-party.
As compulsory as attendance at a jury.
As punctual as a Director at a Board meeting.
As monotonous as a *Statesman* photograph of the Hooghly.
As stale as the head-lines of the daily press.
As refreshing as "Over a Cup of Tea" (in *Hindustan Times*.)
As uninterrupted as gold exports.
As inquisitive as the income-tax authority.
As vigilant as the C.I.D. in plain clothes.
As unenviable as a witness under cross-examination.
As busy as the police in a Congress procession.
As crowded as a foot-ball match.
As rash as a Calcutta bus-driver.
As undependable as a weather report.
As tedious as accounts of other peoples' illnesses.
As restrictive as White Paper safeguards.

As illusory as popular responsibility in the Hoare Constitution.

As hopeless as the prospects of an Indian Federation.

As useless as a telephone which is out of order.

As annoying as a wrong number on the 'phone.

As wide-spread as a world depression.

As incurable as the present trade slump.

As catastrophic as a fall in commodity prices.

(*Post Script*.—The Editor on perusal of this list of comparisons—as *formidable as the demands of communal leaders*—suggested that “as witty as G.L.M.” might be added. But the addition was declined by the author owing to his not being *as modest as Eavesdropper's references to his own writings*.)

23rd September, 1933.

ON EXPERTS

Now that scientists and poets have joined the Battle of the Ratio, economists are beginning to feel nervous, if not panicky. Some of the economists are thinking of composing poems like "An Elegy written in a City Bullion Market" or "An Ode to Devaluated Dollar" or "A Hymn to High Tariffs"; others are considering the question of compiling scientific theses on such subjects as "the Bio-chemical Reactions of Bi-metallism" or "Exports and Ether" or "Refractions of Reflation." *Indian Finance* might now turn itself into a comic journal or take to publishing poems.

I am, of course, all for experts. It is so modern. We have experts for illness (doctors) and experts for health (sandows and gymnasium masters); experts for the soul (the priest) as well as for the sole (Bata); experts for hair (the barber) and for heirs (solicitors); experts on virtue (the preacher) no less than for vice (the detective); experts for washing dirty linen in private (the dhobi) and in public (the journalist). There are experts in martial law as well as marital law. There are expert motorists, pedestrians, umbrella-repairers and even experts on love—like the eugenist. There was once an expert who when he read Tennyson's famous lines :

*Every moment one is born
Every moment one dies*

wrote to the Poet that if this were the case, the

population of the world would be stationary. As it is, however, the number of births exceeds the number of deaths, and hence the lines should be recasted thus :

*Every moment 1.9 is born
Every moment 1.3 dies*

which was not only poetic, but strictly accurate.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the government in this country, who are most advanced and upto-date in all questions where their emoluments or allowances and the profits of the Britishers are concerned, have always realised the importance of *taking* expert opinion on all questions ; when it comes to *acting* upon that expert opinion, they also take expert opinion as to whether they should *act* on the expert opinion given by the previous set of experts. Meanwhile, the conditions investigated by the first set of experts undergo a change, so that their reports become out-of-date and a new enquiry is essential. In fact, it becomes imperative from time to time and is often overdue. We have therefore had a succession of experts going into a series of questions for generations. It helps to keep the government well-informed and abreast of the times. Only recently, how many experts have we had ? Experts about economy and about expenditure ; experts for military budget and training, marine reorganisation, aviation ; experts to advise about banking, railway expenditure, road-rail competition, marketing ; experts for devising expert methods of economic investigation and experts for organising expert economic bureaus ; experts for Federation, for Franchise, for Finance and for Federal Finance ; there have even been experts for

Facts—although to many experts, all facts are born free and equal. Shades of Inchcape, the infallible Pope, the schoolboy monograph of Fredrick Whyte on Federal Governments, of Layton, Salter, Brigadier-General Hammond and a host of others rise before the mind's eye. For experts may come and experts may go; but the problems go on for ever.

One expert, indeed, leads to another. An expert on industrial conditions is naturally followed by an expert on fiscal policy and an expert on currency policy is necessarily succeeded by an expert on banking; an expert on railway reorganisation is the logical corollary of an expert on railway economy, while an expert on *settling* lines of economic enquiry is the inevitable sequence of an expert on *devising* lines of economic enquiry. An expert on agriculture gives rise to experts on land revenue assessment, marketing (central and provincial) not to mention experts for sugar, jute and bannanas. The heritage of *expertise* is precious; the light of expert knowledge is carried on from year's end to year's end. Many of the experts appointed by Government are for investigating economic questions because Government have for some time suspected that economic problems are important.

So much at least is common ground between them and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Even the experts agree with the Government—they are paid to—that economic questions are urgent. But as such questions are awfully complicated, complex and technical, it is *economic* in the long run to have experts for them. Who would have thought, for instance, that the question of purchase of coal is so

intimately related to the question of fixing a ratio? Or that trade forms both a tide and a cycle? Or that appreciation of the benefits of depreciation is so lacking that there is not sufficient depreciation for the policy of appreciation? Economic questions are terribly complicated.

But it is necessary to emphasise one fact. Experts are not made : they are born—usually in England and more often in the Indian Civil Service. England, it is well-known, lives principally by exports of manufactured goods. Apart from cotton textile, steel, X-mas crackers etc. she also manufactures experts, who manufacture reports and opinion.

England, therefore, exports experts.

She supplied experts to the League of Nations, Hungary, Russia (who recently re-exported them back to England), China, Africa, Argentine, Ceylon and India. Experts form an important item in the "invisible" imports of a backward country ; they help to maintain the international equilibrium of trade. Gold exports from India, for instance, are balanced by the import of experts with golden opinion.

Now consider, for a moment, the services rendered by such experts. Their reports and memoranda have so filled the pigeon-holes of the Secretariats that the pigeons have no holes to live in and have had to emigrate to the streets. I understand there is a strict rule in the Delhi Secretariat that cigarettes must not be thrown anywhere lest they might burn some memoranda of experts lying about. And these experts have foreseen events not only six months before they happened but even eight months before they did

not happen. They forecast events of 1931 not only in 1932 but even in 1933. There are no limits to powers of these experts. They prophesy a boom in securities market and behold ! it does *not* come off. Experts have then to explain *why* it did not come off : much like the meteorologist three-fourth of whose time goes in trying to find out why his last weather forecast has been belied by the weather. Inscrutable forces are working both in weather and in the world of finance.

Experts have assured us for instance that trade is turning a corner. Every month, almost every week, they tell us so. Trade was to turn a corner when England went off the gold standard, then after the Lausanne Conference, then after the Ottawa Conference, then when America went off the gold standard or off something at least (experts are not yet decided as to what America went off and what she went to). India is turning corners more rapidly than any other country —*pace* the Finance Member—owing to Ottawa, gold exports, the far-sighted currency and exchange policy, the establishment of the Reserve Bank, Bombay-Lancashire Pact, financial safeguards, goodwill of the City of London and so forth. No wonder Indians are feeling dizzy at the rate at which we are turning one corner after another. But Sir George Schuster faces the future with hope and confidence every March. The courageous optimism of this greatest financial expert (according to Mr. Anklesaria, himself a great expert in judging experts) reminds one of the confidence exhibited by one of the three men falling off a roof who as they passed the fifth floor observed cheerfully, “I am probably falling less slowly than the others.” Experts

have to decide things *ex parte*; but they are determined to solve the economic tangle before the end of this century—provided, that is, mankind survives till then. Expert opinion differs on that point. But all economic solutions, as you know, are hypothetical. Expert conclusions are valid—*other conditions remaining the same*. Fortunately for the experts, but unfortunately for the rest of us, other conditions *do not* remain the same.

There is, I feel, only one difficulty. It is trivial, I admit, nevertheless, I cannot help mentioning it. Experts do not, as a rule, agree as to the causes nor as to the remedies in any given case. Is the trade slump due to a fall in prices or the fall in prices due to trade slump? Are monetary factors the cause or the effect of the present depression? Is the depression due to over-production or under-consumption? Is scarcity of money due to over-abundance of goods or *vice versa* or *verse vica*? Should a country go off the gold standard in June or in September? Should the ratio be changed overnight or in broad daylight? Does our economic system depend on the production of wealth or the destruction of crops? Should we spend in order to create employment or save in order to effect economy? Ought we to "Buy British" in order to consolidate the Empire or "sell British" (to foreigners) to encourage international trade? Should we de-flate, inflate or re-flate? Should we have gold, silver, paper or tin as the basis of our monetary standard? On these and numerous other issues, there is no unanimity among the experts. Nor is that all. Experts disagree with one another not only on objective grounds but even on subjective ones.

They live by taking in each other's washings. They refuse to acknowledge one another as experts. In fact, they ridicule the perverted knowledge, the fallacies, the heresies and the bias of other experts more than the ignorance and dullness of us poor laymen. Just as no prophet is worshipped in his own country, no expert is honoured by his own set of experts. Chemists never speak well of one another nor economists overflow with affection for each other; physicists receive recognition only from philosophers, artists are at home with businessmen and insurance agents are happy only at jute brokers' offices. Half the time of the specialists is taken up in denouncing one another and in proving that the other fellows are not experts at all. The layman thus begins to suspect everybody and doubt everything. Life becomes confusion worst confounded.

For there are no experts in the one thing common and fundamental to us all and which we are all trying to do, however unsuccessfully. There are no experts for life.

16th December, 1933.

WISDOM IN A NUTSHELL

The Steel Protection Bill of 1927 embodied Imperial Preference without a reference to British Steel. This was in deference to Indian sentiment at the time.

* * * *

It is said that Sir Charles Innes (the Commerce Member) always places all his cards on the table. It is inferred from this that Sir Charles is a permanent dummy when playing Bridge.

* * * *

Is it true that the modern Eleventh Commandment is "Thou shalt not be found out?"

* * * *

How many times has the bureaucracy been declared "morally bankrupt?" Occasionally, it prefers that to being financially bankrupt. But if there were an Ethical Insolvency Court, all the days in the year would be spent in hearing the cases against the powers-that-be!

* * * *

My strongest objection to the Swedish Match Trust in India is that whenever I happen to glance at a newspaper containing this name, almost invariably do I read it as *Swadeshi* instead of Swedish. Will the Tariff Board note this possibility of confusing a foreign combine with an indigenous industry?

* * * *

Orators speak of the sins of omission and commission of the bureaucracy. But there are several omissions on the part of Government to respond to the Commission—and their own Commissions, in fact. On other occasions, the sin of omission (of Indians) leads to a sin of (Simon) Commission.

* * * *

In India, charity begins at Home. The capital letter is insisted upon because of the interest of capital.

* * * *

The proper motto of an Eavesdropper is : where there is a key-hole, there is hope.

* * * *

When the Spanish Monarch abdicated, a currency authority foresaw its effects on the Spanish crown and predicted that the Spanish crown would fall. And fall it did.

* * * *

When a Britisher is ignorant, he is presumed to be impartial; and when he is biassed, he is called an expert.

* * * *

Apropos the Currency controversy, I feel that we should no longer speak of "caring a two-pence" for anybody or anything. A two-pence is really the difference between 1s. 4d. and 1s. 6d. and what profound issues has it raised? A two-pence, it seems, means the difference between high prices and low prices, between benefiting producers and wage-earners, between stimulating exports and encouraging imports, between the salvation and the liquidation of the economic life of the

country. It is for a two-pence that Sir Basil Blackett and Sir Purshottamdas have fallen out and how then can one continue to say still—"I care a two-pence for you!"

* * * *

The news that America has offered a moratorium has excited even those people who are not quite certain what a moratorium is. A friend of mine was under the impression that it was something half-way between a mortuary and an auditorium ; but he felt pleased that after all President Hoover, President of the U.S.A., had offered it to Europe.

* * * *

Apropos these giltedged securities, a student of economics enquires what is this gilt-edge for? Cannot the whole of the security be gilded—even if all that glitters is not gold? If only the edge is gilded, what is the colour or metal of the central portion of these securities? Latterly, the term iron-edge securities seems more appropriate for them!

* * * *

It has been calculated that if all the reports, memoranda, notes, minutes, files and papers bearing on constitutional reforms in India since the Muddiman Committee were piled up, they would very nearly reach the moon. When the Die-Hards condemn the Indian aspiration for self-rule as crying for the moon, the obvious reply therefore is that the moon *can* be reached through the results of the constitutional enquiries alone.

